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Except where indicated otherwise in the table of contents the following is a complete translation of the Russian-language monthly journal VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL.

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LEAD EDITORIAL: UNITY OF IDEOLOGICAL, ORGANIZATIONAL WORK

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 85 (signed to press 24 Dec 84) pp 3-10

[Editorial by Col Gen I. Repin, military council member and chief of the Political Directorate of the Order of Lenin Moscow Military District: "V. I. Lenin, the CPSU on the Unity of Ideological and Organizational Work in the USSR Armed Forces"]

[Text] In constantly following Lenin's legacy, our party gives enormous significance to ideological work. It sees in it a tested and powerful means of mobilizing the masses to carrying out the great and complex tasks in the present stage of development in Soviet society.

V. I. Lenin repeatedly pointed to the inseparability of ideological and organizational work. "...It is impossible," he said, "to precisely distinguish which process is a political one and which an organizational one. Any political question can be an organizational one and vice versa.... It is impossible to mechanically separate the political from the organizational."[1]

Lenin clearly expressed this same notion in defining the tasks of Social Democracy which was working in all strata of the people. "We should go into all classes of the population both as theoreticians, as propagandists, as agitators and as organizers,"[2] he pointed out.

In defining the paths of communist indoctrination for the Soviet people, the CPSU has particularly emphasized that the effectiveness of ideological work is significantly increased if it is closely linked to organizational activities.

The principle of unity in ideological and organizational work presupposes an optimum combination of these two major aspects. Certainly, their unity is not something set once and for all, ossified and unchanging. The relationship between them, their actual content as well as the specific forms of unity change along with the change in historical conditions, the social and political situation.

The activities of V. I. Lenin serve as a brilliant example of skillfully combining ideological and organizational work. To him belongs the historic accomplishment of working out the state and party documents which not only proclaimed the founding of the Armed Forces of the world's first socialist state,

but also formulated the underlying principles of their organizational development, training and indoctrination.

Along with theoretical activities, V. I. Lenin carried out energetic organizational work in directing the party, the state and the Armed Forces. Regardless of his enormous workload, he found time also for direct indoctrination of the masses, including the Red Armymen. Lenin frequently spoke with them and talked at Red Army meetings and assemblies. On 11 May 1918, V. I. Lenin participated in a solemn ceremony of the taking of the socialist oath (the first military oath) by the soldiers and commanders of a number of units in the Moscow Garrison and held on the territory of the Mikhel'son Plant. There he gave a speech.[3]

The enormous vital strength of the unity of ideological and organizational work was fully apparent in the years of preparing the masses of people for the revolution and particularly in the post-October period. The construction of socialism required the reindoctrination of the people as well as great organizational work by the party in all areas of social life. V. I. Lenin considered the main thing in organizational work to be the selection, placement and training of the cadres and the check on the actual carrying out of questions. He urged that the responsible administrative posts be filled by "people with a clear mind and practical boldness, people who combine a dedication to socialism with the ability without noise (and in spite of the rush and noise) to establish close and strong joint work by a large number of people within the soviet organization."[4]

This also applied fully to the Armed Forces. V. I. Lenin and the party saw in the unity of ideological and indoctrinational work the guarantee for increasing the combat capability of the army. "We have established a sound foundation for the Red Army...," wrote V. I. Lenin later, "by a new type of work, by political propaganda on the front, by the organizing of communists in our army and by the unstinting organization and struggle of the best people from the working mass."[5]

Under the immediate leadership of V. I. Lenin, a party-political apparatus was established in the army and its main goal consisted in ensuring a moral-political preparation of the soldiers to defend the socialist fatherland, to instill in them a belief in the rectitude of the Communist Party's policy and indoctrinate them in a spirit of Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism.

In the interests of successfully carrying out these tasks, in April 1918, the institution of military commissars was introduced and the All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars was established and with its help the RKP(b) [Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee directed the activities of the military committees.

The party forces which came under the colors of the young Red Army provided a skillful combination of ideological and organizational work. Particularly great in this area was the role of the military commissars who brought a lively word into the Red Army masses and were their organizers, the agents of our party's spirit, its discipline, firmness and courage. It is no accident that

their activities were highly praised at the Eighth RKP(b) Congress. "The party," note the documents of this congress, "can with full satisfaction look at the heroic work of its commissars who, hand in hand with the best elements of the command personnel, in a short period of time have established a battle-worthy army."[6]

An important role was given to the party cells in the ideological and political indoctrination of the soldiers and commanders. Their missions were outlined by numerous documents. The Decree of the RKP(b) Central Committee on Party Work in the Army of 25 October 1918 set out the duties of the party cells in organizing agitation work, disseminating literature and raising the overall indoctrinational level of the masses.

The organizational activities of the commanders, political bodies and party organizations were also apparent in establishing a system of ideological and political indoctrination of the personnel. Undergoing development were such component parts of it as theoretical activities, propaganda, mass agitation and cultural-educational work. Agitation at this time assumed a particularly active nature. The meetings, Red Army assemblies, group and individual talks, agitation trains and various campaigns such as, for example, Red Officer Day, Wounded Red Armyman Week, effectively served the cause of the communist indoctrination of the masses and the mobilizing of them to defeat the counterrevolutionary forces and interventionists.

Even during the years of the Civil War a strong effort was made to organize political studies. Precisely then arose one of the main forms for the ideological and political indoctrination of the personnel, the political exercises. In the course of them the men gained knowledge in the fundamentals of political literacy. The first experiment in such work was gained in 1918 in the Petrograd Garrison. The All-Russian Bureau of Military Commissars recommended that this be disseminated into all the units being organized. However, the exacerbation of the situation on the front did not make it possible to fully carry out this decision.

After the Civil War the principle of unity in the ideological and organizational work of the Armed Forces underwent further development. This was reflected in the fact that all the activities of the commanders and political workers were carried out considering the requirements of life, combat training and the new tasks under the conditions of peacetime construction. This was based on Lenin's idea of strengthening the nation's defense capability and raising the battleworthiness and combat readiness of the Armed Forces. "...Our steps toward peace," said V. I. Lenin, "should be accompanied by a straining of all our military readiness...." He then emphasized: "This should be the basis of our agitation and propaganda and we should be able to prepare for this...."[7]

First of all, the party focused its efforts on improving the ideological tempering of the command and superior personnel. In the Decrees of the Party Central Committee "On Strengthening the Red Army," "On the Political-Moral State of the Red Army" and "On the Command and Political Personnel of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army]," in the materials of the all-army meetings of party organization secretaries and in a number of other documents, the tasks were outlined for political training, the forms of its organization and ways for further

improvement. In 1923, a political studies program was announced and in 1926, all the command and political personnel were brought together into the appropriate groups. Some 6 years later, Marxist-Leninist training became a component part in the system of commander exercises.

A major role in improving Marxist-Leninist training was played by the Decree of the VKP(b) [All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)] Central Committee "On the Organizing of Party Propaganda in Line With the Publishing of the 'Short Course of VKP(b) History'" of 14 November 1938. In accord with this document, in the commander training system some 90 hours of study time were allocated for studying party history. At the same time mention was made of the need to organize self-education and a profound independent study of the works of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, the congress decisions and other party documents.

In the 1938-1939 academic year, the study of the "Short Course" became the basis for the curricula in all elements of party education. In 1939, the work of the divisional and brigade party aktiv schools was also revised. The schools admitted not merely communists who wanted to study but also party-political workers who needed to improve their knowledge.

The increased scope of indoctrinational work demanded definite organizational changes in the Army and Navy political bodies. In 1930, introduced in the political sections of the formations were the positions of senior instructors both for party organizational and agitation-propaganda work, while in 1932 the position of propaganda instructor was introduced by a decision of the party Central Committee in the regiments.

A number of party documents outlined the tasks of the political workers and commanders. A majority of these was related both to ideological and organizational work. For example, the Decree of the RKP(b) Central Committee "On Strengthening the Red Army" set the task of involving the command personnel in systematic party political work among the Red Army masses.[8] For this purpose, the political sections were given the duty of assigning tasks to each communist commander in the area of party political work for the coming 2-3 months and demanded a report on their fulfillment.

Year after year the scope of propaganda and agitation widened. Their content was largely determined by the conference of military delegates at the 11th RKP(b) Congress. "The task of military propaganda," the conference resolution stated, "is to arouse in the young Red Armyman an interest in military affairs and a desire to become a good fighter not out of fear but out of conscience."[9]

In line with the deteriorating international situation, the necessary measures were taken to strengthen the impact of ideological and organizational work on carrying out the tasks of increasing troop combat readiness. In the spring of 1940, the VKP(b) Central Committee conducted a conference on the questions of ideological work in the Army and Navy. The conference recommended that the political bodies and party organizations organize indoctrinational work in the troops in terms of combat conditions and considering the growing military danger, develop in the soldiers and commanders such qualities as courage, tenacity and offensive zeal and teach what is essential in a war.

This principle underlay the Directive of the Main Directorate of Political Propaganda of 28 August 1940 "On Reorganizing Party-Political Work." "Political propaganda and agitation," this document emphasized, "is not an end in itself but rather a means for increasing the combat readiness of the Red Army and strengthening Soviet military discipline and a high political-moral state in the personnel."[10]

With the outbreak of the Great Patriotic War, the party initiated great organizational and ideological work. This was based upon the instructions of V. I. Lenin concerning the party's work under wartime conditions. "Like it or not," said V. I. Lenin in 1919, "the question is raised: we are at war and the fate of the revolution will be determined by the outcome of this war. This should be the first and last word of our agitation and all our political, revolutionary and transforming activities."[11]

In accord with the Directive of the USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars] and the VKP(b) Central Committee of 29 June 1941, the task of reorganizing the awareness of the people to a wartime footing was proposed as the main one. Using the strength of its ideological and organizational impact, the party honorably carried this out, mobilizing the Soviet people to defend the socialist motherland. Subsequently, the main efforts in this work were focused on carrying out specific military-political tasks arising in the course of the war depending upon the situation on the front and in the rear.

Assuming an ever-greater role in the ideological support for the tasks of armed combat were meetings, political information sessions, group and individual talks, the listening to summaries of the Sovinformburo [Soviet Information Bureau] over the radio and inssuing the proclamations and appeals of the military councils. The inferior-level aktiv played a major role in explaining combat missions and mobilizing the men to carry them out.

The measures adopted by the VKP(b) Central Committee to strengthen the party organizations contributed largely to actually embodying the Leninist principles of unity in ideological and organizational work. A significant portion of the leading party workers was sent into the Army and Navy. Around one-half of them were members and candidate members of the VKP(b) Central Committee. Leaving for the front were 270 highly placed workers from the Central Committee apparatus, 500 secretaries from the central committees of the Union republic communist parties as well as the kray, oblast and rayon party committees. As a total in 1941-1945, 13,850 leading party workers were mobilized into the Armed Forces.[12]

The communists were the soul of our army and its backbone. Their personal example in combat, their intrepidness and courage were the most vivid manifestation of the organizing and mobilizing role of the party in the Armed Forces. Loyal to the legacy of V. I. Lenin, the party redistributed its cadres, being constantly concerned to fill out the ranks of the VKP(b) with worthy proven soldiers. At the end of 1941, there were 1,234,000 communists in the Army and Navy or two-fifths of the entire party membership. On 1 January 1945, the Armed Forces had 3,030,758 communists.[13]

These data are convincing proof that our party during the war years was a truly fighting party. Its colossal role in the defeat of Naziism was indisputable. "The Leninist Communist Party," emphasized the decree of the CPSU Central Committee, "was the inspirer and organizer of the victory of the Soviet people."[14]

The communists united the ranks of the motherland's defenders and actively carried out ideological and organizational work. Under the conditions of the front, the unity of these aspects of party activity was further deepened. The Battle of Stalingrad can serve as an example. The commanders, the political workers, the party organizations and all the communists in the autumn of 1942 carried out great work, explaining the enormous significance of the Stalingrad line for the outcome of the war. Their main efforts were aimed at persuading the defenders of Stalingrad that victory was possible and effectively preparing each of them for decisive and unstinting actions in combat.

This work was carried out everywhere. Its importance is hard to overestimate. As was emphasized in the Decree of the CPSU Central Committee "On the 40th Anniversary of the Soviet People in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945," our party organized the masses to defeat the enemy and actively conducted their indoctrination in a spirit of profound ideological conviction and wholehearted belief in the rightness of Lenin's great cause. This served "as an inexhaustible source of the spiritual forces of the Soviet people and their moral-political solidarity,"[15] and as components of the Great Victory.

In the postwar years, the process of further improving ideological and organizational work in the Soviet Armed Forces was actively continued. Here an important role was played by the October (1957) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee. "The main source of our Army and Navy's might is," points out the decree adopted at it, "that the Communist Party is their organizer, leader and indoctrinator as it is the leading and guiding force of Soviet society."[16]

Having thereby emphasized the stability of the underlying principle of Soviet military organizational development, the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee outlined measures to develop the Leninist principles of party leadership, including the principle of the unity of ideological and organizational work.

In carrying out this decree, the party Central Committee in April 1958 changed the Main Political Directorate of the USSR Ministry of Defense into the Main Political Directorate of the Soviet Army and Navy. At that time the military councils under the commanders-in-chief of the Armed Services were reorganized as the military councils of the Ground Forces, Navy, Air Forces and National Air Defense Troops. All of this significantly raised their role in the life of the troops and fleet, it increased their responsibility for the combat readiness of the Armed Forces and told positively on the level of ideological and organizational work and on strengthening their unity.

However, the rapidly developing revolution in military affairs, the greatly changed nature of modern combat and the exacerbation of the ideological struggle on the international scene placed new, higher demands on the training of the Soviet military and on their ideological and moral-psychological tempering. Under these conditions the party Central Committee again returned to the question of improving party political work in the Soviet Army and Navy. On

21 January 1967, a decree was adopted. One of its main demands was to improve political and organizational work among the servicemen, having concentrated the basic efforts on further increasing the combat readiness of the Armed Forces.[17]

The party Central Committee also adopted a number of other important measures related to improving the style, forms and methods of party ideological and organizational work. In particular, they began to systematically hold all-army conferences for the secretaries of the party and Komsomol organizations and for ideological workers. A new Regulation on Political Bodies and Instructions to the CPSU Organizations in the Soviet Army and Navy were approved.

Under present-day conditions, the importance of the Leninist principle of the unity of ideological and organizational work has increased even more. This has been repeatedly pointed out in recent party documents. "The question is," pointed out the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, Comrade K. U. Chernenko, "that at present, as never before, the successes of party leadership over society depend upon the consistent observance of the Leninist principle of the unity of ideological, organizational and economic work."[18]

The successful carrying out of the tasks related to further improving developed socialism is only possible under the condition of active organizational activities by the party to strengthen our economy and improve the life of the Soviet people as well as by systematic and consistent work for their ideological and moral indoctrination.

As throughout the nation, under army conditions ideological work, with all the importance of other questions, more and more has moved to the forefront. It represents the activities of the military councils, the commanders, political bodies and party and Komsomol organizations aimed at shaping in the Soviet military a Marxist-Leninist ideology and indoctrinating communist awareness and the high moral-political and combat qualities essential for the unstinting defense of the socialist fatherland and mobilizing the servicemen to carry out the tasks confronting the troops.

As is known, the June (1983) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee drew a conclusion on the need to widely involve the leading cadres and all the forces of the party in ideological work. This idea was particularly emphasized by MSU D. F. Ustinov in speaking at one political day of the Central Apparatus of the USSR Ministry of Defense. "Everyone must be well aware," he said, "that ideological work is not only a question for the professionals: the ideologues and propagandists. This is a concern of the entire party and each communist, regardless of the position held."[19]

However, it cannot be assumed that ideological work in and of itself is capable of carrying out all tasks. As was pointed out at the June (1983) Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, it must not be given only the achieved successes or only it criticized for the existing shortcomings. This emphasizes its very close unity with organizational work. Such unity should permeate the entire content of party-political work which unites party organizational and ideological

activities. The fundamental questions of party work are carried out both by organizational and ideological work.

The commanders, political bodies and party organizations of our district proceed from these party concepts. Where there is a strong unity of ideological and organizational work, there are high achievements in the maintaining of combat readiness, military order and discipline are firmer and the given tasks are carried out more successfully. As an example, take the aviation unit under the command of Lt Col V. Lisovskiy. For more than 10 years this military collective has been an outstanding one. And now it has reaffirmed this high title. In carrying out any assignment, here they always profoundly think out a range of both ideological and organizational measures. Because of this each soldier develops a profound awareness of the importance and social sense of the work of the motherland's defenders and the party's demands on them under the conditions of the aggravated international situation. They ensure the duly prescribed precise organization of military and political training as well as the life and routine of the personnel.

In ensuring a close unity in the ideological and organizational work lies the guarantee for successfully carrying out combat missions in exercises, firings and other training. Let me refer to the experience of the Kantemirovka Order of Lenin and Red Banner Guards Division imeni Yu. V. Andropov. The actions of the Kantemirovka tankmen at one of the exercises involving field firing were given a high grade. Analysis showed that the success was not accidental but rather the result of a large range of organizational and ideological measures related to the preparation and execution of the exercise. The plan envisaged seminars and instruction sections, the exchange of advanced experience and competitions to meet the standards, meetings with frontline veterans and reader conferences on military memoir works. A scientific-practical seminar on "The Content and Particular Features of Party-Political Work on the Offensive," firing and technical conferences and other measures were conducted in an interesting manner. And all of them, both the ideological and organizational, complemented one another, they enriched the men with knowledge and actual skills in the exercises and instilled in them an understanding of the pending tasks and a feeling of personal responsibility for their fulfillment. And this ultimately led to success.

In our district a particular place is assigned to those forms of work which make it possible to study most effectively the requests and mood of the personnel and in accord with this take measures to maintain a healthy moral situation in the troop collectives. Among these are the unified political days, the question and answer evenings, the Lenin readings, lessons and quizzes. For example, recently, the District Political Directorate organized a district-wide unified political day on the question "To Unswervingly Observe the Standards of Communist Morality." Participating in it was all the leadership from the district commander, Army Gen P. G. Lushev, to the deputy unit commanders. In the course of preparing and holding it, hundreds of requests and proposals were received from the men. Scores of them were involved with further improving combat training, the training facilities, improving the recruitment, placement and indoctrination of the cadres and strengthening the indoctrination of the personnel. The realization of these proposals demanded great organizational work from the commanders, political bodies and party organizations.

However, in practice at times a deviation is permitted from the party demands. This was taken up at the party meetings in the course of the report-election campaign. For example, the communists from the unit where Maj V. Ya. Gerasimov is the party committee secretary, stated directly that the poor link in the unity of ideological and organizational work had told negatively on the deeds of the military collective and did not allow it to carry out the assumed obligations. The communists drew lessons from this conclusion and are now taking the appropriate measures.

A unity of ideological and organizational work is an important factor in effectively carrying out the tasks of increasing vigilance and combat readiness. It is our duty to more fully utilize this factor in the interests of the further development of the competition to properly celebrate the 27th CPSU Congress and the 40th anniversary of the Great Victory, in improving the combat skills of the personnel and instilling in them a feeling of historical responsibility for the fate of socialism and for the flourishing and security of the motherland.

FOOTNOTES

1 V. I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], vol 45, pp 122-123.

2 Ibid., vol 6, p 82.

3 See: "V. I. Lenin i Sovetskiye Vooruzhennye Sily" [V. I. Lenin and the Soviet Armed Forces], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1969, p 80.

4 V. I. Lenin, PSS, vol 36, p 193.

5 Ibid., vol 37, pp 467-468.

6 "KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s"yezdov, konferentsiy i plenumov TsK KPSS" [The CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Plenums of the CPSU Central Committee], vol 2, Moscow, Politizdat, 1970, p 65.

7 V. I. Lenin, PSS, vol 40, p 248.

8 "KPSS o Vooruzhennykh Silakh Sovetskogo Soyuza" [The CPSU on the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1981, p 161.

9 "Ideologicheskaya rabota v Vooruzhennykh Silakh SSSR" [Ideological Work in the USSR Armed Forces], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1983, p 118.

10 Ibid., p 159.

11 V. I. Lenin, PSS, vol 37, p 15.

12 "Partiya i armiya" [Party and Army], Moscow, Politizdat, 1977, p 174.

13 I. I. Roshchin, A. I. Marchuk, "Partorgi voyennoy pory" [Wartime Party Organizers], Moscow, Politizdat, 1979, pp 15, 20.

[14] "Decree of the CPSU Central Committee 'On the 40th Anniversary of the Victory of the Soviet People in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945'," PRAVDA, 17 June 1984.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "KPSS v rezolytsiyakh...," vol 7, 1971, p 296.

[17] "KPSS o Vooruzhennykh Silakh...," p 446.

[18] K. U. Chernenko, "Speech at a Meeting With Voters of the Kuybyshev Electoral District of Moscow," PRAVDA, 3 March 1984.

[19] "Materialy Plenuma Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS, 14-15 iyunya 1983 goda" [Materials of a Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, 14-15 June 1983], p 69.

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DETAILED EXAMINATION OF VISTULA-ODER OPERATION

Mar Avn Rudenko: General Overview

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 85 (signed to press 24 Dec 84) pp 11-21

[Article by Hero of the Soviet Union, Mar Avn S. Rudenko*: "On the 40th Anniversary of the Vistula-Oder Operation"]

[Text] The year 1945 has gone down in the history of the Great Patriotic War as the year of the concluding victories of the Soviet people and their Armed Forces over Nazi Germany. The peoples of the countries in the anti-Hitler coalition began a new year, confident of the quick and victorious end of the war. This confidence was based primarily on the great victories of the Soviet Armed Forces. After a long and stubborn struggle filled with heroism and self-sacrifice, the territory of the Soviet state (with the exception of the northwestern part of Latvia) had been completely liberated from the Nazi invaders.

By the start of 1945, the Soviet Army had already successfully carried out its liberation mission in the European countries. Our troops had entered the territory of Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Northern Norway. The troops of the United States, Great Britain and France were approaching the western frontiers of the Reich.

Nazi Germany at that time was undergoing a severe crisis. It had lost virtually all of its allies and was in complete political isolation. On the fronts the Hitler Army had suffered unrecoverable losses in personnel and equipment. Just during the summer and autumn of 1944, enemy losses on the Soviet-German Front were 1.6 million men, 6,700 tanks, 28,000 guns and mortars and more than 12,000 aircraft.[1]

Regardless of this, the Nazi Army was still rather strong. It numbered up to 9,420,000 men (not counting the 350,000 men in the foreign formations). It included 295 divisions (including 34 tank and 16 motorized) and 30 brigades.

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* In the Vistula-Oder Operation, Col Gen Avn Sergey Ignat'yevich Rudenko was the commander of the 16th Air Army of the First Belorussian Front.

Nazi Germany had 315 divisions and 32 brigades along with the Hungarian ones (16 divisions and 1 brigade) and the Italian ones (4 divisions and 1 brigade). A large portion of these forces was on the Soviet-German Front.[2]

The strategic situation on the central sector of the Soviet-German Front by the start of 1945 was characterized by the following. The Nazi Command gave great importance to holding the major industrial areas of Poland, particularly the Silesian, Lodz, Poznan and Kielce-Radom. The rulers of the Reich repeatedly emphasized that with their loss Germany would be deprived of the possibility of continuing the war. Moreover, the shortest route to the center of Nazi Germany ran across Poland and the Vistula was viewed by the Nazis as the last, best natural barrier for organizing the defenses. All of this forced the Wehrmacht Command to carry out measures to repel the Soviet troop offensive in Poland. The area between the Vistula and Oder was prepared by them for protracted and stubborn defense: the total depth of the seven defensive lines established there reached 300-500 km. In the area from the mouth of the Western Bug to the town of Jaslo, three armies of the Army Group "A" were fighting under the command of Gen J. Garpe. Their total size was 560,000 men. The Nazis focused their basic efforts against the Soviet assault groupings which were on the bridgeheads in the areas of Magnuszew, Pulawy and Sandomierz.[3]

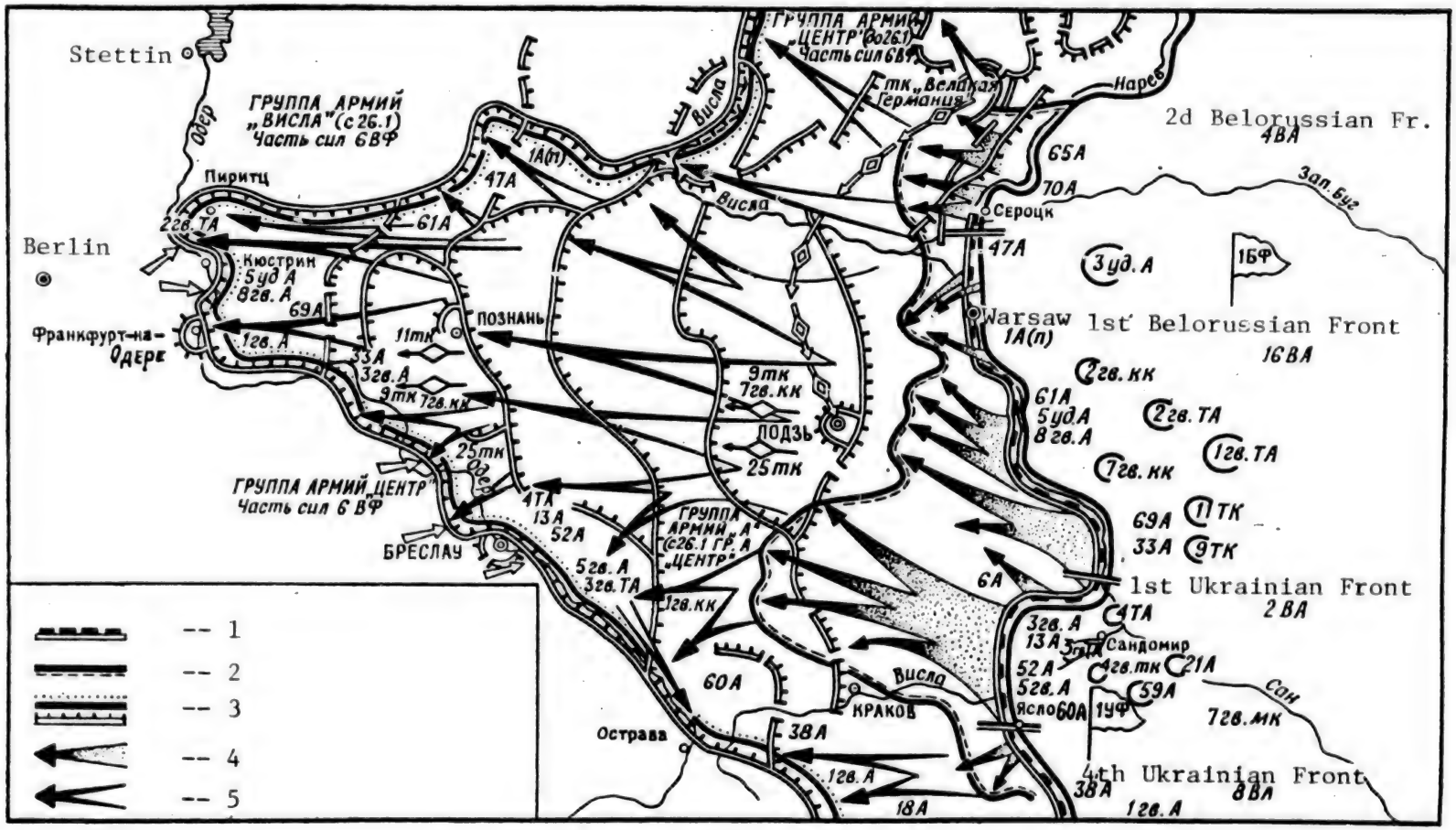
The preparation of the Soviet troops for the Vistula-Oder Operation, one of the major strategic offensive operations of the Great Patriotic War started even in the autumn of 1944.

The Soviet Armed Forces were confronted by important political goals: completing the liberation of the Polish people from the suppression of the Nazi invaders and providing them aid in restoring Polish lands. The defeat of the main forces of Army Group "A" was a prerequisite for the concluding thrust against Berlin. At the same time, the diverting of a portion of the Nazi troops from the Western Front eased the difficult situation for the Allies in the Ardennes and Vosges.

The overall plan of Headquarters envisaged by making powerful thrusts against the enemy on the Poznan and Breslau sectors, to crush the enemy defenses to their entire depth, to split the defending troops into isolated groups and defeat them piecemeal. To be used in carrying out the operation were the troops of the First Belorussian Front (commander, MSU G. K. Zhukov, military council member Lt Gen K. F. Telegin, and chief of staff Col Gen M. S. Malinin) and the First Ukrainian Front (commander, MSU I. F. Konev, military council member Lt Gen K. V. Kraynyukov and chief of staff, Army Gen V. D. Sokolovskiy). As a total these would have 2,203,700 men, more than 33,500 guns and mortars, over 7,000 tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount], and 5,000 combat aircraft. Thus, the Soviet troops surpassed the enemy by 3.9-fold in personnel, by 6.7-fold in artillery, by 5.7-fold in tanks and SAU and by 7.9-fold in aircraft.[4]

In accord with the overall plan of the operation, the troops were to carry out the following missions (see the diagram).

The First Belorussian Front was ordered to defeat the Warsaw-Radom enemy grouping and by no later than the 11th or 12th day of the operation, to capture the



The Vistula-Oder Operation (12 January - 3 February 1945)

Key: 1--Main area of Vistula defensive line
2--Position of Soviet troops by 18 January 1945
3--Front line by end of 3 February 1945
4--Axis of Soviet troop thrusts from 12 through 17 January 1945
5--Axis of Soviet troop thrusts from 18 January through 3 February 1945

line of Pietruwek, Zychlin, Lodz (a depth of 150-180 km). Subsequently, it was to continue the offfensive against Poznan.

The troops of the front were to make three thrusts: the main with the forces of four all-arms armies, two tank armies and a cavalry corps from the Magnuszew bridgehead on the general axis of Poznan; the second from the Pulawy bridgehead with two all-arms armies, two tank corps and a cavalry corps on the Lodz axis; the third with the forces of one all-arms army to the north of Warsaw and the 1st Polish Army from the south. The 16th Air Army would attack from the air on all three sectors.

The First Ukrainian Front, in cooperation with the First Belorussian Front, was to rout the Kielce-Radom grouping and no later than the 10th-11th day of the operation, to capture the line of Piotrkow, Czestochowa, Bochnia (a depth of 120-150 km); subsequently to continue the offensive against Breslau.

With the forces of eight all-arms armies and two tank armies, three separate tank corps, a mechanized corps and a cavalry corps, the troops of the front were to make a powerful thrust from the Sandomierz bridgehead on the Radomsko, Breslau axis. From the air the troops of the front would be covered by the 2d Air Army (commander, Col Gen Avn S. A. Krasovskiy).

The total depth of the operation was set as follows: 300-350 km for the First Belorussian Front and 280-300 km for the First Ukrainian Front. These fronts were to be assisted by troops from the left wing of the Second Belorussian Front from the north and the right wing of the Fourth Ukrainian Front from the south.

During the preparations for the operation, plans were carefully worked out for the forthcoming combat operations, the combat skill of the troops was improved, the entire depth of enemy defenses was reconnoitered from the Vistula to the Oder, materiel was stockpiled and troop regrouping and concentration were carried out.

For making the thrusts from the bridgeheads, it was essential to create on each of them a strong troop grouping which possessed significant independence and the ability to rapidly break through the defenses and then develop an offensive at a rapid pace to a great depth and not allow the enemy to promptly organize defenses at the subsequent, previously prepared defensive lines in the operational depth. A decisive superiority over the enemy was achieved in the breakthrough sectors of both fronts, with these sectors comprising 15 percent of their area and high operational densities were established (230-250 guns and mortars, 80-115 tanks and SAU, from 13 to 17 engineer companies per kilometer of front).[5] Such a massing of men and weapons was to contribute to rapidly developing the offensive in the aim of anticipating the enemy in occupying the prepared intermediate lines. Both fronts assigned resources to surround and destroy the enemy on the boundary line of the fronts in the immediate operational depth and this provided security for the flanks of the assault groups and close cooperation among the fronts.

The command of the fronts gave particular attention to the surprise and deception of the forthcoming offensive. For this purpose, there was continuous air

monitoring of the state of camouflage of our troops along the routes and in the assembly areas. Due to the measures undertaken it was possible to conceal the plan of the operation, the amount of resources involved and the time the fronts were to go over to the offensive. Thus, German intelligence felt that the First Belorussian Front had 31 divisions instead of 68. A meeting at his Headquarters on 24 December 1944, Hitler asserted that the Russians did not intend to go over to a major offensive from the Vistula line. He was supported by Himmler who on 9 January 1945 stated: "...I do not believe that the Russians will advance at all."[6]

According to the plans of Hq SHC [Headquarters, Supreme High Command], the going over of the fronts to the offensive was set for 20 January 1945. However, the situation which had developed on the front of our Western allies influenced the time of the operation's start.

In December 1944-January 1945, the Nazi Command had initiated a counteroffensive in the Ardennes and this put the American-English troops in a difficult situation. In this context, on 6 January 1945, the British Prime Minister, W. Churchill, turned to I. V. Stalin in a letter containing a request for a major offensive by the Soviet troops in the near future. Loyal to its Allied obligations, the Soviet Command shifted the start of the offensive up 8 days before the planned date.

In terms of the content of the combat missions to be carried out, the Vistula-Oder Operation can be divided into two stages: the first (from 12 through 17 January) involving the breaking through of enemy defenses, the defeat of its main forces, the liberation of Warsaw, the reaching by the troops of the line of the immediate mission and establishing conditions for a further offensive; the second (from 18 January through 3 February) involving the rapid development of the offensive by the Soviet troops in depth, the pursuit of the enemy, the defeating of its operational reserves, the capturing of the Silesian industrial district, the reaching of the Oder and the capturing of bridgeheads on its western bank.

On 12 January, regardless of the extremely bad weather, under the cover of heavy artillery fire, the assault groupings of the First Ukrainian Front commenced the offensive. By mid-day they had captured two positions of the main defensive area. In order to more rapidly complete the breakthrough, the 3d Guards and 4th Tank Armies of Gens P. S. Rybalko and D. D. Lelyushenko as well as the XXV, XXXI and IV Guards Tank Corps were committed to battle. This significantly increased the strike force of the front. The desperate enemy resistance was crushed. With the improvement in the weather, the 2d Air Army went into battle. On that day it made 466 aircraft sorties.[7]

The Nazi Command, in endeavoring to prevent the advance of the Soviet troops, initiated counterstrikes by the forces of the XXIV Tank Corps from the area to the north of Chmielnik. On 13 January, a fierce meeting encounter developed.

In 2 days of fighting, the formations of the front repelled the enemy's attempts to halt their advance by tank troop counterstrikes, they had broken through the tactical defensive zone and began pursuing the enemy. The deep breakthrough (25-40 km) by the First Ukrainian Front and the offensive by the

First Belorussian Front which began soon thereafter created the threat of encirclement for the Nazi troops defending along the Vistula. In order to ensure their retreat, the Wehrmacht Command endeavored at any cost to hold the city of Kielce. On 15 January, the Soviet troops liberated this industrial and administrative center of Poland.

The troops of the front were pushing rapidly to the west in a 250-km area. In destroying or bypassing enemy strongpoints or centers of resistance and in thwarting the enemy's attempts to organize defenses on intermediate lines, the tank and rifle formations without stopping crossed the Warta and on 17 January liberated the city of Czestochowa. The Polish population joyously welcomed their liberators.

Fierce battles were also fought on the Krakow sector. The Nazi Command, mustering its last forces, held the city, however the troops from the left wing of the First Ukrainian Front, regardless of the fierce resistance by the enemy blocking the paths to the Upper Silesian Industrial Area, on 17 January reached the suburbs of Krakow.

The First Ukrainian Front, during the 6 days of the offensive, had defeated the main forces of the Wehrmacht 4th Tank Army and in cooperation with the Fourth Ukrainian Front had dealt a major defeat to the enemy 17th Army.

The offensive by the troops of the First Belorussian Front started on 14 January from the Magnuszew and Pulawy bridgeheads. On the same day, the enemy defenses were crushed opposite the Magnuszew bridgehead to a depth up to 12 km and on the Pulawy bridgehead to 20 km. In order to exploit the success, the commander of the First Belorussian Front on 15 January committed to battle the 1st Guards Tank Army of Col Gen Tank Trps M. Ye. Katukov. By the end of the day, its forward units, having advanced 40-50 km, reached the Pilica River. On the following day, the 2d Guards Tank Army of Col Gen Tank Trps S. I. Bogdanov was committed from this line into the breach. The Nazis endeavored to hold up the advance of the front's troops and committed to battle two tank divisions from the reserve XL Tank Corps, but they were crushed and their remains thrown back.

During the period of the offensive of the 69th Army, mass heroism was shown by the men from the 1st Battatlion of the 215th Guards Rifle Regiment of the 77th Guards Rifle Division. In fighting boldly and resourcefully, they were the first to break through the four enemy defensive trenches. The men of the battalion (around 350 men) were awarded the Order of Glory and three of them became full winners. The army military council awarded the battalion the honorific designator "Battalion of Glory." All the platoon and company commanders were awarded orders while the 23-year-old battalion commander, Maj B. N. Yemel'yanov, and the platoon commander, Lt M. N. Gur'yev, were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

On the day the offensive was started by the First Belorussian Front, due to the bad weather, the 16th Air Army did not participate in breaking through the enemy defenses. However, on 16 and 17 January, in benefiting from the clear weather, it made 5,979 combat sorties. By attacking railroad junctions and

river crossings, the Soviet bombers destroyed enemy troop accumulations while the ground attack planes destroyed the columns of its tanks and motor vehicles.

On 16 January, the 1st Polish Army (commander, Lt Gen S. G. Poplavskiy) went over to the offensive. During the night of 17 January, its main forces, having crossed the Vistula in the area of the 61st Army, approached Warsaw from the south. In the morning, with the support of the 16th Air Army and the Polish Mixed Air Division, it simultaneously with units from the 61st and 47th Armies (commanders, Col Gen P. A. Belov and Maj Gen F. I. Perkhorovich) initiated battles on the streets of the city and by mid-day the remnants of the enemy troops had been eliminated and the Polish capital was completely liberated.

By the end of the day of 17 January, the troops of the First Belorussian Front had carried out the immediate mission. As a result of the 4-day offensive operations they had defeated the main forces of the German 9th Army and had advanced 100-130 km in depth.

Having begun to break through on several sectors which were significant distances apart, the troops of the two Soviet fronts were now on the offensive in a 500-km zone. Having advanced to a depth of 100-160 km, they defeated the main forces of Army Group "A" and its remnants were forced to retreat to the west.

Thus, the four tank armies and six separate tank and mechanized corps which had been concentrated on the Warsaw-Berlin sector ensured not only the rapid conclusion of the breakthrough of enemy defenses but also rapid rates of advance in the operational depth. The immediate mission posed by Hq SHC for the fronts of reaching the designated lines by the 10th-12th day of the operation was carried out by the troops in 4-6 days, that is, twice as fast as was planned.

For strengthening the defenses, the Wehrmacht Command was forced to hurriedly shift divisions from the western front, from the interior regions of the nation as well as from other sectors of the Soviet-German Front to the Berlin sector. But the Soviet troops, after carrying out the immediate mission, developed rapid pursuit of the enemy which did not halt night or day. On 25 January, the troops of the First Belorussian Front broke through the Poznan defensive line and surrounded the enemy garrison of 62,000 men in the Poznan area, and on 26 January reached the old German-Polish frontier. By the end of the day of 3 February, six armies of the First Belorussian Front in a 100-km zone to the south of Zehdan had reached the Oder, they crossed it and captured several bridgeheads on the left bank (to the north and south of Kustrin). Just 60 km remained to Berlin. But the developing situation did not make it possible to extend the offensive. By this time the troops of the First Ukrainian Front had reached the Oder in a 200-km zone, they crossed it at a number of points, they seized several bridgeheads and initiated combat to widen them. The left-flank armies of the front initiated fierce battles for Upper Silesia. The Nazi Command, having concentrated in large forces here, endeavored to hold this important military-economic region. But by a rapid maneuver of the front's all-arms armies and subsequently also the 3d Guards Tank Army to the south, the enemy was finally defeated. At the start of February, the armies on the left wing of the First Ukrainian Front had reached the Oder. The rapid rate of advance for the

troops was a consequence of bold, highly fluid actions and the enormous offensive drive of the Soviet troops. The main role in pursuing the enemy was played by the tank armies and by the separate tank, mechanized and cavalry corps. In outflanking centers of resistance, they boldly advanced in depth and thwarted the enemy attempts to organize the defenses on intermediate lines. The ground units were skillfully supported by aviation.

The Vistula-Oder Operation ended with the reaching of the Oder by the Soviet troops and the capturing of bridgeheads on its left bank. In terms of its scope and the achieved results, this was one of the major strategic operations in the concluding period of the war. In the course of it, the Soviet troops successfully and quickly defeated a major enemy grouping, they liberated a significant portion of Poland, they shifted combat operations to the territory of the eastern regions of Germany and arrived at the near approaches to Berlin.

The defeat of the enemy in the operation was carried out by the method of deep frontal thrusts by the forces of two cooperating fronts. As a total over the 23 days, the deeply echeloned enemy defenses were crushed between the Vistula and the Oder. In pushing 500 km to the west, the Soviet troops together with the Polish formations entered German territory. Some 35 enemy divisions were destroyed and 25 lost from 50 to 70 percent of their personnel. The Soviet troops took prisoner more than 147,000 soldiers and officers and captured around 14,000 guns and mortars, up to 1,400 tanks and assault guns and much other weapons and military equipment.[9]

The decisive factor in the success of the operation was the rapid breakthrough of the tactical defensive zone, the defeat of the first echelon and the close enemy operational reserves. This was achieved by correctly selecting the axes of the main thrusts and by establishing on them powerful troop groupings. The decisive massing of men and equipment from the breakthrough sectors made it possible to achieve predominant superiority over the enemy. Basically the breakthrough was carried out by the all-arms armies. Individual tank corps participated in its conclusion and also tank armies in the area of the First Ukrainian Front.

The breakthrough of the deeply echeloned enemy defenses necessitated a deep operational configuration of the fronts and armies. Thus, the operational configuration of the fronts included first and second echelons, strong mobile groups and reserves. The armies were formed up depending upon the missions to be carried out in one or two echelons. Only the 3d Guards Army of the First Ukrainian Front which was to commit its main forces around the flank of the enemy assault grouping had a three-echelon configuration. Reserves were assigned in the armies for completing the encirclement of the enemy and repelling its counterattacks and counterstrikes. In a number of the all-arms armies in whose areas tank armies were not fighting, mobile groups were organized consisting of one or two tank corps.

The battle formations of the rifle corps, divisions and regiments, as a rule, included two echelons, artillery groups, all-arms and antitank artillery reserves and mobile obstacle construction detachments. Such echeloning made it possible to successfully break through the enemy defenses, to promptly increase the effort in the operational depth and develop the offensive at a rapid pace.

Characteristic of the Vistula-Oder Operation was a rapidity of the offensive by the Soviet troops. This commenced with the breaking through of the enemy defenses on several sectors that were a significant distance apart. The general front for all the breakthrough sectors did not exceed 73 km. On the 4th day of the operation, the front of the offensive was widened to 500 km and by the end of the operation our troops, having advanced more than 500 km, were fighting on a 1,000-km front. The average daily rate of advance was 25 km; on individual days this reached 45 km and for the tank and mechanized formations, 70 km.[10] In this operation, the highest rates of advance were achieved both for the tank and the all-arms armies in the Great Patriotic War. Such high rates of advance were caused by the powerful initial thrust against the enemy grouping in its tactical defensive zone, by the high breakthrough strength and great maneuverability of the Soviet troops, by broad maneuver and close cooperation of all branches of troops.

The rapid nature of the offensive was also influenced by the fact that the formations and field forces had strong second echelons and reserves, strong mobile front and army groups and these were skillfully employed in the course of the operation.

The fluid actions of our troops in the Vistula-Oder Operation contributed to the encirclement of the large enemy groupings and to defeating the retreating enemy formations and its reserve. All of this deprived the enemy of the possibility of restoring a solid defensive front.

Characteristic in this regard was the great distance of the mobile troops from the first echelon armies of the fronts. For example, the lead of the 1st and 2d Guards Tank Armies of the First Belorussian Front sometimes reached 90 km. In the aim of expoiting their success and maintaining cooperation with them the all-arms armies assigned strong forward detachments.

In the Vistula-Oder Operation, the combat operations ended by the capturing of bridgeheads on the Oder. Their presence made it possible to maintain the advantageous operational position in relation to the enemy, it ensured the concentrating of strong assault groupings on the opposite bank and freed our troops from the need of crossing the river with the start of the subsequent offensive operation. The battle to hold and widen the bridgeheads were of a protracted and intense nature. Thus, the struggle to retain the tactical bridgeheads and broaden them on the Oder in the Kustrin area in the zone of the First Belorussian Front lasted 2 months. As a result, an operational bridgehead was formed up to 54 km along the front and up to 10 km in depth. Participating in the battles to broaden this were the troops of the two all-arms armies with reinforcements and significant forces of the frontal [tactical] aviation. The Nazi Command was forced to commit over nine divisions to these battles.

Aviation played a major role in the operation. In retaining air supremacy, it provided direct support to the troops of the fronts and covered them against enemy air operations. In developing the breakthrough and pursuit of the enemy, the formations and units of the air armies, in cooperating closely with the mobile troops of the fronts, destroyed the retreating enemy columns and did not allow the enemy to dig in on intermediate lines.

The air offensive was planned and implemented in a new manner employing bold airfield hopping and the shifting of the flight units beyond the front line into the combat area of the mobile troops in the enemy rear.

The success of the operation was aided by effective party-political work conducted in the troops. Due to the fact that combat operations were conducted on the territory of allied Poland, chief attention of the commanders, political bodies, party and Komsomol organizations was focused on the need to explain to the Poles the liberation mission of the Soviet Army, at indoctrinating proletarian internationalism and providing help to the Polish patriotic forces in rebuilding the destroyed economy and organizing normal life in the nation. Great work was carried out to strengthen friendship and ties between the soldiers and the local population.

The Vistula-Oder Operation again demonstrated to all the world the enormous might of the Soviet Armed Forces and the superiority of Soviet military art. It also showed the increased skill of the Soviet military leaders as well as the valor, heroism and combat skill of the soldiers, sergeants and officers.

Thousands of soldiers and officers were awarded orders and medals for heroism and high military skill and for successfully carrying out missions in the liberation of Poland and many were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. The army commanders, Gens S. I. Bogdanov, P. S. Rybalko and V. I. Kuykov, the corps commander Gen V. A. Glazunov and the Officers A. Ye. Borovykh, N. I. Goryushkin, I. I. Gusakovskiy, S. V. Khokhryakov, A. P. Shilin and P. I. Shurukhin received this title for a second time. Some 1,192 formations and units of the First Belorussian and First Ukrainian Fronts received orders for the exemplary carrying out of combat missions in the offensive from the Vistula to the Oder. Many regiments, brigades, divisions and corps received honorific designators in honor of the cities where they distinguished themselves in capturing these cities. Some 25 times Moscow saluted the troops in honor of the victories in the Vistula-Oder Operation.

In the postwar years, bourgeois historiographers have endeavored to play down the importance of the Vistula-Oder Operation. But such a task has been beyond them. The great offensive between the Vistula and Oder has caused amazement among workers of many countries. It was highly praised also by certain bourgeois leaders and also the press. The British prime minister in a message to I. V. Stalin of 27 January 1945 wrote: "We are thrilled by your great victories over the common enemy and by the powerful forces which you have fielded against it. Receive our warmest gratitude and congratulations on the occasion of the historic feats."

The outstanding victory won by the Soviet Armed Forces in the Vistula-Oder Operation was clear proof of the superiority of Soviet military art over the military art of Nazi Germany. This was achieved due to the advantage of the social and state system of the Soviet nation, to the leadership of the Communist Party and to the mass heroism of the Soviet people.

FOOTNOTES

[1] See: "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Moscow, Voyenizdat, vol 2, 1976, pp 63-64.

[2] See: "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], Moscow, Voyenizdat, vol 10, 1979, p 35.

[3] Ibid., pp 58-59.

[4] Ibid., p 59.

[5] See: ibid., p 62.

[6] See: ibid., p 65.

[7] See: ibid., p 70.

[8] See: "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voyenizdat, vol 4, 1959, p 147.

[9] See: "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...," vol 10, p 85.

[10] See: "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," vol 2, p 148.

[11] "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...," vol 10, p 86.

Yefimov: Deep Air Operations

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 85 (signed to press 24 Dec 84) pp 22-29

[Article by Mar Avn A. Yefimov, commander-in-chief of the Air Forces and USSR deputy minister of defense, twice Hero of the Soviet Union: "Employment of Aviation in Conducting an Operation at a Rapid Pace and To a Great Depth (From the Experience of the Vistula-Oder Operation)"]

[Text] The air situation prior to the Vistula-Oder Operation generally had developed favorably for Soviet Aviation. The main forces of the Nazi Army Group "A" (from 26 January "Center") defending in front of the First Belorussian and First Ukrainian Fronts, although numbering a total of over 600 aircraft,[1] were significantly inferior to our air grouping. The enemy aviation on the Warsaw-Berlin sector was based at 12 airfields and this made it possible for the command of the 6th Air Fleet to maneuver the forces and additionally station 850-1,000 aircraft at them. Prior to the start of the operation, the enemy Luftwaffe in the aim of saving on flying time and fuel had showed little activity. On a front 500 km long, from the mouth of the Western Bug to Jaslo,

the enemy made just 25-30 aircraft overflights a day, chiefly for reconnaissance purposes. At the same time, the Nazis had established a strong air defense system, basically antiaircraft artillery.

The grouping of Soviet aviation included: the 16th Air Army (commander, Col Gen Avn S. I. Rudenko, chief of staff Lt Gen Avn P. I. Brayko) of the First Belorussian Front with 2,190 aircraft and the 2d Air Army (commander, Col Gen Avn S. A. Krasovskiy, chief of staff Maj Gen Avn A. S. Pronin) of the First Ukrainian Front with 2,582 aircraft.[2] Thus, Soviet aviation had significant numerical superiority over enemy aviation. In addition, it surpassed the enemy in terms of the quality of the aircraft fleet and the combat skills of the personnel.

The commanders of the fronts set the following basic missions for the air armies during the operation to cover the ground forces in the concentration areas and in the course of the operation to its entire depth, to maintain air supremacy; by air strikes against enemy artillery positions, tanks and personnel to contribute to the advance of the field forces in the offensive in breaking through enemy defenses and in committing the mobile groups of the fronts to the breakthrough; during the rapid pursuit of the Nazi troops to attack the retreating troops, crossings and rail junctions; to prevent the bringing up of reserves and the occupying of defensive lines in depth; to conduct continuous air reconnaissance and observation of the battlefield. In accord with this the commanders of the 16th and 2d Air Armies took decisions which lay at the basis of the plans for the combat employment of aviation.

The plan for the employment of the 16th Air Army envisaged that 5,625 aircraft sorties would be made over the 6 days prior to the start of the offensive for covering the troop concentrations, for attacking airfields and conducting air reconnaissance.

The basic forces of the air army were to be concentrated on the sector of the main thrust. Up to 80 percent of the front's aviation was to operate on the Magnuszew bridgehead. For supporting and covering the 5th Assault Army, for example, one ground attack and one fighter air corps and two bomber divisions were assigned. The 8th Guards Army was to have one ground attack and fighter division, as well as two bomber divisions; the 61st, 69th and 33d Armies would each have ground attack and fighter divisions. The fight to maintain air supremacy and the covering of the troop concentrations were entrusted to the III Fighter Corps and to the 282d and 283d Fighter Divisions.

One or two ground attack and one or two fighter divisions were assigned to support each tank army, while one ground attack and one fighter division were assigned to the separate tank and cavalry corps.

Centralized aviation control was envisaged up to the commitment of the mobile groups to the breakthrough. Air operations in escorting the mobile troops were planned for 4 days. Here the aviation was given missions for 2 days of the operation.

Virtually all the ground attack and fighter aviation was assigned for air support of the combined-arms (tank) armies. Bombers made up the reserve of the air army commander.

The air formations which were assigned to support the troops in the operational depth were to be rebased first. At the same time, the III Bomber Corps and the 1st Guards Fighter Division were to be rebased.

The plan for the combat employment of the 2d Air Army was worked out for 3 days of the operation during which 12,080 aircraft sorties[3] were to be made (4,760 on the first day, 3,950 on the second and 3,370 on the third). During the night before the start of the offensive, the PO-2 night bombers of the 208th Night Bomber Division were to attack enemy troops and equipment in the area of Tarnow in the aim of diverting the attention of the Nazi Command from the sector of the main thrust of the First Ukrainian Front.

In breaking through the enemy defenses, all the forces of the air army were concentrated to support the 13th, 52d and 5th Guards Armies. During the period of the air softening up for the attack, the bomber aviation was to make strong concentrated raids against the enemy artillery, reserves and strongpoints. In the course of supporting the troops on the first day of the offensive, the chief role was assigned to wave operations of the ground attack aviation. Here fighter and ground attack formations covered and supported each all-arms army fighting on the sector of the main thrust.

Two fighter divisions were assigned to maintain air supremacy. In addition, on the first day of the operation, enemy aviation was to be destroyed at the Krakow, Dieszno and Naglowice airfields by bomber and ground attack aviation.

The commander of the air army possessed a significant air reserve consisting of two bomber air corps and one night bomber division.

The 16th and 2d Air Armies were given the mission 2 hours before the offensive to make air strikes against the command and observation posts and communications centers in the aim of disrupting troop command and control.

Behind the advancing ground forces, it was planned that the air units would move from one airfield to the next by building new airfields as well as using existing dirt ones. Thus, prior to the start of the operation 17 airfields with previously established supplies were built on the Sandomierz bridgehead some 10-15 km behind the front line.

The staffs of the air armies worked out plans for the rebasing of aviation to the entire depth of the operation and ahead of time assigned airfield engineer battalions, search parties and airfield service battalions which were to move up as part of the battle formations of the mobile troops.

Ensuring surprise and high effectiveness of the air strikes, the reliability of command over the air formations and units and clear cooperation with the tank troops with their rapid advance to a great depth were the chief content of all the preparations for the operation.

The Soviet Command gave exceptionally great attention to discovering the defensive structures between the Vistula and the Oder. During 40 days preceding the start of the Soviet offensive, according to plans of staffs of the fronts, intensive air reconnaissance was carried out to a depth of 400-500 km and vertical

aerial photography of all the enemy defensive lines in Poland. The forward edge of the enemy defenses was obliquely photographed seven times. The territory photographed by the Soviet pilots was 212,787 km^2 which surpasses the area of England by more than 1.6-fold.

One of the main questions in preparing aviation for combat operations was the organizing of cooperation with the all-arms (tank) field forces, formations and units as well as between the branches of aviation. Of important significance were the command-headquarters games and exercises. The military game conducted by the commander of the First Belorussian Front, MSU G. K. Zhukov, and the exercise under the leadership of the chief of staff of the First Ukrainian Front, Army Gen V. D. Sokolovskiy which involved the commanders and chiefs of staffs of the air formations provided an overall orientation and basis for the planning of air operations. These questions were examined in greatest completeness in the course of exercises conducted by the air army commanders in December with the commanders of the air corps and divisions and with the chiefs of staff.

The air army staffs devoted a great deal of attention to training the air representatives in the ground forces and the air spotters. Troop exercises were conducted jointly with the air formations assigned to their support. The ground attack and bomber aviation underwent combat training along with the fighters. Great attention was given to the shaping up of the young flight personnel. In the 16th Air Army at the end of December 1944, the command and political section organized a rally of the best fighter and ground attack pilots. In the course of the collective discussion, attention was paid to the effective methods of combat operations and the ways for cooperation with the ground units in the forthcoming operation. The rally was attended by 110 air aces, including 18 Heroes of the Soviet Union. The bomber pilots worked out the method of dive-bombing. The flight personnel studied in detail the area of the forthcoming operations while the crews of the leading groups became familiar with the forward edge.

In accord with the regrouping plan, the aviation was to be flown to the forward airfields one or two days prior to the start of the offensive.

During the preparatory period, extensive party-political work was carried out in the air field forces and this was directed at indoctrinating high offensive zeal in the personnel. Directly before the start of combat operations, in all the air formations and units the appeals of the military councils of the fronts were read and meetings were held where the Soviet aviators vowed to honorably carry out their international duty in liberating the Polish people from Nazi enslavement.

As the course of air operations was to show, the measures carried out in the preparatory period had a decisive impact on the course of the operation.

Regardless of the extremely bad weather conditions which excluded at the start of the operation the possibility of conducting an air softening up for the attack, the 2d Air Army in the first 4 days made 2,030 aircraft sorties.[4] Under these conditions a major role was played by the training level of the personnel. At the end of the first day of the offensive, around 400 ground attack planes and bombers in small groups and as individual aircraft with low cloudiness and

limited visibility had attacked enemy columns moving up from Kielce and Chmielnik. The enemy suffered high losses. By the evening the advance of the enemy tank corps had been halted. On the following day during daylight, crews of the IV Bomber Corps and II Ground Attack Corps with a fighter escort successfully operated against major Nazi forces which had concentrated and begun moving up on the flank of the 4th Tank Army to the south of Kielce and to the north of Chmielnik, having destroying around 50 tanks and 400 vehicles.[5]

The decisive operations by the Soviet pilots against the enemy reserves which were being moved up, the continuous support of the troops, and their dependable cover against air strikes to a significant degree helped the troops in rapidly moving forward toward the second defensive line and crossing the Nida River without a halt and surrounding and defeating more than four enemy reserve divisions to the south of Kielce and to the north of Chmielnik.

With the start of the enemy troop retreat, Soviet aviation was confronted with the mission of preventing the enemy from establishing an organized defense on the third line.

The improving weather conditions made it possible on 16 and 17 January to begin extensive air operations in the interests of the tank armies and make around 4,000 aircraft sorties.[6] The most effective were the strikes against columns of the Nazi XLII Army Corps and the 10th Motorized Division retreating from the area of Skarzysko-Kamienna toward Radomsko. The bombers and ground attack planes in groups up to 30 aircraft continuously attacked the retreating troops.

During the first 2 days of the offensive and under exceptionally difficult weather conditions, the 16th Air Army in the aim of carrying out the missions assigned to it made a total of 276 aircraft sorties by individual best trained crews.[7]

At dawn of 16 January, air reconnaissance established the directions of the enemy's retreat. The bombers and ground attack planes began to destroy the columns and accumulations of enemy troops on the highway and railroads of Sochaczew--Lodz, Skierniewice--Tomaszow--Mazowiecki, Radom--Opoczno.

Under the conditions of the sharp increase in the rate of advance, great difficulties arose in maintaining dependable cooperation of the aviation with the tank troops in the course of pursuing the retreating enemy. Often a situation developed where the commanders of the air formations, in advancing ahead along with the commanders of the tank corps, were unable to promptly give a combat mission to his formation over his own communications. At that time, for communicating with aircraft in the air and for transmitting instructions to the staffs of the air divisions (regiments), they employed the radios of the tank formation commanders. For example, disrupted cooperation was thus restored between the XI Tank Corps and the 3d Guards Attack Air Division as well as between the IX Tank Corps and the 300th Attack Air Division on 16-17 January.

The bombers, ground attack planes and fighters, in operating continuously against the enemy on the defensive and against its firing positions in centers of resistance ahead of the advancing assault groups, to a significant degree helped the Soviet and Polish troops in liberating the Polish capital of Warsaw.

In the battles for the city, the air army made 6,656 aircraft sorties (including 399 by the 1st Mixed Air Division of the Polish Army).

As a total from 12 through 17 January, the pilots of the 16th and 2d Air Armies made 11,748 aircraft sorties and destroyed 44 enemy aircraft in air battles and 86 at airfields.[8]

The combat employment of Soviet aviation in terms of ensuring the high rate of advance for the ground forces in the second stage of the operation (18 January-3 February) assumed a new content.

The Soviet pilots continued conducting combat operations under the conditions of variable weather which inevitably required adjustments in the plans for the employment of aviation. The aviators, in cooperating with the forward units, assisted them in surmounting enemy resistance and ensured non-stop advance. The deep and rapid penetration of the forward detachments into the enemy rear, in becoming possible due to the dependable cover and support from the air, did not make it possible for the Nazi troops to utilize the rear line for the defense. The hurried attempts by the enemy command to shift troops from its reserve, from the Western Front and from other areas of the Soviet-German Front in the aim of restoring the pierced front were unsuccessful. The arriving reserves came under attack by our aviation, tank formations and were destroyed piecemeal. Such a fate also befell the Tank Corps Grosse Deutschland. Due to the able and decisive operations of the bombers, ground attack planes and fighters, the shifting of another five enemy infantry divisions to the Warta defensive line was prevented.[9]

An analysis of the fight against the retreating troops and reserves shows that aviation quickly spotted the enemy columns, was the first to attack and create blockages on their routes. The tank formations completed their defeat.

The experience of the Vistula-Oder Operation showed that in the course of the pursuit of the enemy by a tank army at a rate of 30-50 km and more a day, the aviation cooperating with it under bad meteorological conditions often is unable to move up to new airfields. For this reason, the command of the fronts, the air and tank armies endeavored to undertake every measure to promptly rebase the front aviation, to capture enemy airfields in the operational depth as well as areas of terrain suitable for rapidly building landing strips.

The moving up of the airfield engineer units as well as the airfield maintenance battalions under the cover of the forward detachments was one of the most effective measures. In order not to fall behind the rapidly advancing troops, the command of the 16th Air Army boldly maneuvered its aviation. For example, moving up behind the forward detachments of the 2d Tank Army were an airfield maintenance battalion with supplies of fuel, ammunition and food and an airfield engineer subunit reinforced with transport and armored personnel carriers in order after the airfield in the area of Sochaczew had been captured by the tank troops it would quickly be readied to receive aircraft. All the specialists were armed and were trained for defense in the event of an enemy attack. On 18 January, the 402d Fighter Regiment was moved up to the Sochaczew airfield while fighting was still underway on the northwest edge of the town. Ground attack planes landed behind the fighters. The help to the tank army from

aviation became even stronger. In turn the commander of the 2d Guards Tank Army, Gen S. I. Bogdanov, assigned a tank brigade to defend the airfield. Instances were known when the aviators themselves surprise attacked and captured airfields, as was the case in the area of Wriezen.[10]

At the same time, it must be pointed out that in the final stage of the operation, the air command to a certain degree disregarded the questions of conducting an active struggle against enemy aviation, as significant fighter forces had been assigned to destroy the retreating enemy forces. With the arrival of the Soviet troops on the territory of Nazi Germany, particularly toward the Oder, the Nazis in the zone of advance of the First Belorussian and First Ukrainian Front concentrated major air forces at permanent airfields and sharply increased their activity. The falling behind of the formations created extremely bad conditions for maintaining air supremacy and for securely covering and supporting the ground troops. The distance from the base airfields to the combat areas was up to 200 km and more and this reduced the combat capabilities of our aviation, it shortened the time for air patrolling and completely eliminated sorties for interception from a "ground alert" status. Moreover, the airfields were bumpy and this eliminated operations from them. For this reason the Nazi Luftwaffe in the final stage of the operation temporarily succeeded in seizing the initiative in the air.

Under these conditions, exceptionally important was the decision of the air army command to use sections of the autobahns as landing strips. Pilots from the air corps of Lt Gen Aven Ye. Ya. Savitskiy were the first to successfully employ a section of the highway in the area of Poznan while the air division of Col A. I. Pokryshkin used the autobahn on the Breslau--Berlin leg. This was a new phenomenon in the questions of employing aviation in operations. The rapid construction of landing strips with an artificial surface and the use of ground fields and captured enemy airfields were one of the most important prerequisites making it possible for Soviet aviation in a short period of time to recapture initiative in the air.

The precisely organized command of the air formations and cooperation with the all-arms (tank) field forces were very important factors ensuring the successful operations of aviation in covering and supporting the rapidly advancing ground forces. This was achieved by positioning the command posts of the air formations headed by their command at the command (observation) post of the commanders of the all-arms armies as well as the commanders of the mobile groups of the fronts fighting a significant distance away from the main forces in the enemy rear; by assigning aviation representatives to the formations and field forces; by establishing on the air division staffs two or three operations groups which provided command over the subordinate units with a significant dispersion of them in depth.

In the aim of establishing continuous and stable communications between the command posts, the staffs of the formations and aircraft in the air, intermediate posts were organized and for communications with the staff of the air army there were auxiliary communications centers with STsR-399 radios. Special forces were assigned for their security, defense and cover against air strikes. Moreover, special relay aircraft on patrol in the air were employed for the first time in the practice of troop command and control for increasing the distance of communications.

The combat operations of the 16th and 2d Air Armies in the Vistula-Oder Operation, in terms of their scope, the nature of operations and the achieved results, are an example of the increased skill of the command and the indisputable advantage of Soviet aviation equipment and its skillful use. During the period from 12 January through 3 February, the 16th and 2d Air Armies made 25,400 aircraft sorties and conducted 214 air engagements in which the enemy lost 209 aircraft.[11]

The operational art of the Air Forces took a new step ahead in solving the questions of fire damage to the enemy and providing cover for the advancing troops, in organizing cooperation with ground forces, in control during an operation which was conducted at a rapid pace and to a great depth. This was achieved by the early winning of air supremacy and by keeping it during the operation by destroying enemy aviation in air battles and at airfields, by detailed planning of the employment of the various branches of aviation according to the stages of the operation and the missions of the advancing field forces, and by the skillful choice and fire damage to objects in the combat zones of the all-arms and tank armies (mobile groups of fronts). The basic efforts of the bombers and ground attack planes were focused on combating arriving reserves, preventing the retreating enemy from occupying previously prepared defensive lines, checking counterstrikes and destroying strongly fortified strongpoints. Fighters were effectively used for dependable cover for the mobile groups of the fronts in commiting them to the breakthrough and in actions deep in the enemy defenses.

Of important significance was the prompt rebasing of aviation behind the advancing troops and this was achieved by building airfields close to the combat contact line and by establishing supplies there, by planning the capture and subsequent use of enemy airfields in the zones of advance of the all-arms (tank) armies, by using sections of autobahns as landing strips, by establishing reserve technical aviation and airfield engineer units which moved up along with the forward units of the fronts, and by assigning tank units to capture, secure and defend the airfields. The continuous command of the aviation on ground and in the air was provided by the assigning of operations groups which controlled subordinate units with their significant dispersion in depth, creating intermediate points in the divisions and auxiliary communications centers in the armies as well as by widely using the radio equipment of the ground troops and the relay aircraft.

The careful organization of cooperation between aviation and the ground forces was achieved by carrying out combined command-headquarters games and exercises on a scale of the front or army in the course of preparing for the operation, by assigning air representatives and air spotters to the ground troops, by positioning the air division commanders at the observation (command) posts of the commanders of the all-arms and tank armies and turning over to them a portion of the fighter and ground attack forces for the period of carrying out the most crucial missions, and by carefully worked out signals for warning friendly troops (aircrafts), target designation and traffic control.

The experience of air support for the operation carried out at a rapid pace and to a great depth not only has not lost its importance at present but is of permanent value in the matter of training and indoctrinating Air Forces personnel.

FOOTNOTES

[1] "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," vol 2, 1976, p 147.

[2] "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh...," vol IV, 1959, pp 103, 104.

[3] TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Minsitry of Defense], folio 236, inv. 2712, file 337, sheet 108.

[4] Ibid., folio 233, inv. 2356, file 449, sheets 30, 34.

[5] "Sovetskaya Voyenno-Vozdushnyye Sily v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [The Soviet Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1968, p 369.

[6] Ibid., p 370.

[7] TsAMO, folio 233, inv. 2356, file 449, sheets 30, 34.

[8] "Sovetskiye Voyenno-Vozdushnyye...," p 377.

[9] Ibid., p 378.

[10] S. I. Rudenko, "Kryl'ya Pobedy" [The Wings of Victory], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1976, p 296.

[11] "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...," vol 10, p 87.

Peredel'skiy on Artillery Operations

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 85 (signed to press 24 Dec 84) pp 30-34

[Article by Mar Art G. Peredel'skiy and Col (Ret) G. Khoroshilov: "Artillery in the Engagements From the Vistula to the Oder"]

[Text] For supporting the breakthrough of the deeply echeloned defenses and defeating the Nazi troops on Polish territory, the Soviet Command established a powerful artillery grouping. By the start of the offensive there were over 37,000 guns and mortars (counting the antiaircraft artillery)[1] in the First Belorussian Front (artillery commander, Col Gen Art V. I. Kazakov) and the First Ukrainian Front (artillery commander, Lt Gen Art N. N. Semenov).

The moving up of the artillery to the bridgeheads was strictly controlled. This was done only during darkness and precisely supervised by the traffic control service. In locating a large amount of artillery on limited areas of the terrain, from an artillery battalion to a brigade had to be located at one position. This made it easier to facilitate control of fire and maneuver of the artillery units (groups) but increased the vulnerability of the battle formations to air strikes.

For this reason a strong air defense system was established for securely covering them.

The operational density of the artillery both in terms of quantitative and qualitative indicators surpassed the densities of all the previous major offensive operations of the Great Patriotic War with the exception of the 1943 Kiev Operation. For example, on the breakthrough sector of the 8th Guards Army of the First Belorussian Front, this was up to 350 units per kilometer, with 95 percent being of a system of 76-mm caliber and more. The tactical densities in the formations were even higher.

The density of the antiaircraft weapons on both fronts averaged 15-22 units per kilometer with the highest being up to 40 guns on the main sector of the 3d Guards Army. This guaranteed a dependable cover for the attack groupings, particularly on the bridgeheads, with multilayered antiaircraft fire.

In the Vistula-Oder Operation there was a further improvement in the principles of controlling the artillery and establishing artillery groups. They were now organized, as a rule, along the tactical organizational line: with one general purpose group in each element from the regiment up to the army (PAG [regimental artillery group], DAG [divisional artillery group], KAG [corps artillery group] and AAG [army artillery group]). This ensured close cooperation of the artillery with the tanks and infantry. But it must be emphasized that this was still not the case everywhere. In our view, we cannot consider as advisable the establishing of three army groups--breakthrough, long-range artillery and motorized howitzer--in the 5th Attack Army.

A particular feature of the artillery grouping in the First Ukrainian Front was that they had very strong regimental groupings (up to 9-10 battalions in each). This provided greater independence for the rifle regiments and stronger support of the rifle subunits in breaking through the deeply echeloned enemy defenses. However, as combat operations were to show, such a make-up of the groups was cumbersome and hard to control and this often led to the disrupting of cooperation of artillery with the infantry and tanks.[2]

The artillery reconnaissance bodies carried out a significant amount of work. By the start of the operation, the nature of the enemy defenses had been fully determined and this significantly facilitated the planning of the artillery offensive. MSU I. S. Konev was later to write: "We saw the embodiment of our army's might in a well organized artillery offensive."[3]

In the aim of excluding a delay in the start of the offensive by the main forces, after the reconnaissance in force of the First Belorussian Front, the artillery offensive was planned in two versions. The first envisaged artillery softening up for the attack of the reinforced forward battalions[4] in the form of a 25-minute intense shelling by all the artillery against the forward edge with the simultaneous neutralizing of the major targets to a depth of the position of the first echelon divisions (6-8 km). With the start of the offensive there was to be a 60-minute artillery support of their attack by a single rolling barrage. In the event of the successful combat of the forward battalions and their capturing of the first position, artillery softening up according to the full schedule was canceled and committed to battle without a pause were the main forces of the

first echelon divisions with the support for their attack to be provided by a double rolling barrage. The second version worked out in the event of the unsuccessful fighting of the forward battalions envisaged a 70-minute artillery softening up for the attack of the main forces according to a full schedule. Support for the attack was to be by the method of a double rolling barrage.

On the First Ukrainian Front the artillery softening up for the attack of the main forces was to be carried out over a period of 1 hour 47 minutes (three intense shellings, periods of destruction and neutralization). Here the second intense shelling was planned to last 7 minutes just against the Nazi artillery and mortar batteries (verified and assumed), the antitank weapons and observation posts. Such a massed fire strike was to guarantee the dependable neutralization of enemy artillery in the course of softening up for the attack and to upset its fire plan. Under the conditions of an air situation favorable for our troops, a portion of the antiaircraft artillery was to be involved in counterbattery fire.

With the high artillery densities, registration was a particular concern for the commanders and staffs. Basically this task was carried out by employing ranging guns (POR) with one being assigned to each battalion. Their actions were camouflaged as the firing of "roaming guns." The ranging was monitored on the eve of the operation's start.

During the preparatory period, effective party-political work was carried out in the artillery units. The commanders, the political workers and the communists of the subunits explained to the men the historic importance of the liberation mission of the Soviet Armed Forces and those tasks which they would be carrying out in the immediate future.

At the start of the operation, because of the non-flying weather, the mission of fire damage to the defending enemy rested mainly on the artillery. In the breakthrough sector of the First Ukrainian Front artillery operations began with intense shelling lasting from 7 to 25 minutes. Then at 0500 hours, in full darkness, the forward battalions began a reconnaissance in force. Their attack was supported by the PSO [successive fire concentration] method. By 0700-0800 hours they had driven 600-700 m into the enemy defenses. By 1000 hours, certain forward battalions had advanced up to 3 km. This made it possible to clarify the position of the main enemy strongpoints, the firing positions of its artillery and make adjustments in the fire planning. In particular, certain areas of concentrated fire and the first three lines of the rolling barrage were excluded from the plan.

At 1000 hours a 107-minute artillery softening up was commenced for the attack of the main forces. The first 15-minute intense shelling encompassed the entire depth of the enemy's tactical defensive zone. Then for 40 minutes the artillery carried out methodical destruction and neutralization of objects on the forward edge and in the near depth of the Nazi defenses, firing by direct laying and from indirect firing positions. During the following 7-minute intense shellfire virtually all the artillery focused its fire against the enemy batteries and control bodies. Later, after methodical neutralization and destruction of targets on the second and third positions for 30 minutes and a feint attack by specially assigned rifle platoons, there followed the final powerful 15-minute

intense shelling against the forward edge and the enemy artillery positions. As a result its artillery was almost completely neutralized. According to statements from prisoners, the Nazi officers and soldiers, having lost their self-possession, in a panic abandoned their positions and without permission pulled back into the defenses.[5] The artillery support for the attack by the main forces was provided by a double rolling barrage. With the development of combat in depth, massed fire by the army and corps groups was employed. In the course of the meeting encounter of the Soviet troops with the enemy operational reserves in the Kielce area, exceptionally effective was the firing of guns assigned for direct laying firing.

The offensive by the armies of the First Belorussian Front started after a strong 25-minute intense shelling. The artillery of the front just during the period of softening up for the attack by the forward battalions spent more than 315,000 shells weighing 5,450 tons, including 825 tons, or 15 percent of the total number, going to rocket artillery.[6]

The offensive by the main forces was basically supported by PSO. Only in areas of individual formations was support for the attack initially provided by a double rolling barrage. Subsequently, with fighting deep in the defenses, the PSO method was also employed here.

The artillery which supported the tanks and infantry, in the course of breaking through the enemy defenses, constantly followed behind their battle formations and promptly provided them with the necessary support. Under the conditions of limited visibility, individual gun crews came right up to the enemy strongpoints and fired on the enemy with direct laying at point-blank range.

Characteristically, during the offensive observation of the targets was almost completely excluded due to the smoke and thick dust, however due to the high accuracy of preparing the firing data and to the massing of fire, this had little effect on the end results of the firing.

For eliminating the surviving strongpoints and centers of resistance, extensive use was made of the maneuvering of artillery fire in the aim of massing it on the most important objects. For example, according to the orders of the artillery commander of the 5th Attack Army, Maj Gen Art P. I. Kosenko, fire was massed against a strong center of resistance established by the Nazis in the area of the Grabow Station using three artillery brigades (180 guns) which in 5 minutes sent off 1,150 shells against the enemy. As a result the enemy suffered heavy losses and its resistance was crushed.

The artillery also fought actively in the second stage of the operation. The Soviet artillery troops made a major contribution to liberating the fortress city of Poznan. In just two rifle corps (XXIX Guards and XCI) involved in the storming of the city there were around 1,400 guns, mortars and rocket artillery vehicles with over 1,200 having a caliber of 76 mm and more. The Poznan forts were not destroyed ahead of time and artillery softening up was not carried out. On 27 January, the artillery opened fire at the very moment our infantry went over to the attack. By 3-5-minute intense shellings the artillery troops neutralized the personnel and weapons in the forts until the rifle subunits had sealed off these fortifications.

The combat of the assault groups in a city, as a rule, started with a 10-15-minute artillery softening up and in a number of instances 30-40-minutes ones. The objects of attack were neutralized predominantly by the firing of guns (with a caliber up to 203 mm, inclusively) assigned for direct laying fire. In street battles individual heavy rocket shells were widely employed for direct laying fire from carrying cases.

Destruction of the most important objects in the Poznan fortress Citadel commenced on 9 January with the approach of the large and particularly powerful artillery and by the start of the storming had been basically completed. Artillery softening up for the storming commenced at 1100 hours on 18 February and lasted almost 4 hours.

In pursuing the enemy, the Soviet troops by the end of January 1945 had reached the Oder and initiated battles to capture and hold bridgeheads on its west bank.

The fierce enemy attacks in the course of the battle to retain and widen the bridgeheads were driven off also by the artillery troops together with the infantry and tanks. In the battles for holding the bridgehead at Grossneukirchen, the famous artilleryman and hero of the Battle of the Dnieper, Guards Maj V. S. Petrov, distinguished himself and for this he was awarded a second Gold Star.

In the battle against the air enemy, under the conditions of the great distance of the fighter airfields from the forward edge, an important role was played by the antiaircraft artillery, particularly that which covered the crossings and troops on the bridgeheads. Just in January, antiaircraft artillery fire by both fronts downed and hit more than 500 enemy aircraft.[7]

The ground and antiaircraft artillery of the two fronts in the course of the operation consumed over 6 million shells. And on the First Belorussian Front of the 3.2 million shells the basic mass was consumed during the first 3 days of the operation, that is, in the course of breaking through the tactical defensive zone and committing the mobile groups to the breakthrough.

Thus, the high artillery densities on the breakthrough sectors, as established during the period of preparing for the operation, ensured the simultaneous fire damage to the objects to the entire depth of the enemy tactical defensive zone. This played a particularly important role under conditions where our air operations were excluded due to the bad weather or had a limited nature.

The experience of organizing an artillery offensive according to variations proved effective, since due to this it was possible to increase the rate of advance in breaking through the first area of enemy defenses.

Planning for the artillery softening up in the operation was marked by the working out of graphs that were simple in form and content. This ensured convenience and reliability of control over the fire of a large amount of artillery. In comparison with the previous operations, the specific weight of the intense shellings increased significantly.

The establishing of artillery groups according to the tactical organizational principle showed its viability.

The personnel of the artillery units and subunits in the course of combat added to the glory of Soviet artillery and they showed mass heroism, unbreakable steadfastness and intrepidness. Using rich combat experience, the artillery groops fought with great skill and with profound confidence in the pending victory over the enemy. The artillery formations and units which most distinguished themselves were awarded orders and they were given honorific designators such as Warsaw, Krakow, Lodz, Silesia, Poznan, Oder and others.

FOOTNOTES

1 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...," vol 10, pp 59, 63.

2 "Sovetskaya artilleriya v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg." [Soviet Artillery in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1960, p 621.

3 I. S. Konev, "Sorok pyatyy" [1945], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1966, p 10.

4 On the First Belorussian Front they were called "special echelons" and assigned from the first echelon rifle divisions.

5 "Armiya Sovetskaya" [Soviet Army], Moscow, Politizdat, 1969, p 322.

6 "Polevaya reaktivnaya artilleriya v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Field Rocket Artillery in the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1955, p 480.

7 "Sovetskaya artilleriya v Velikoy...," p 645.

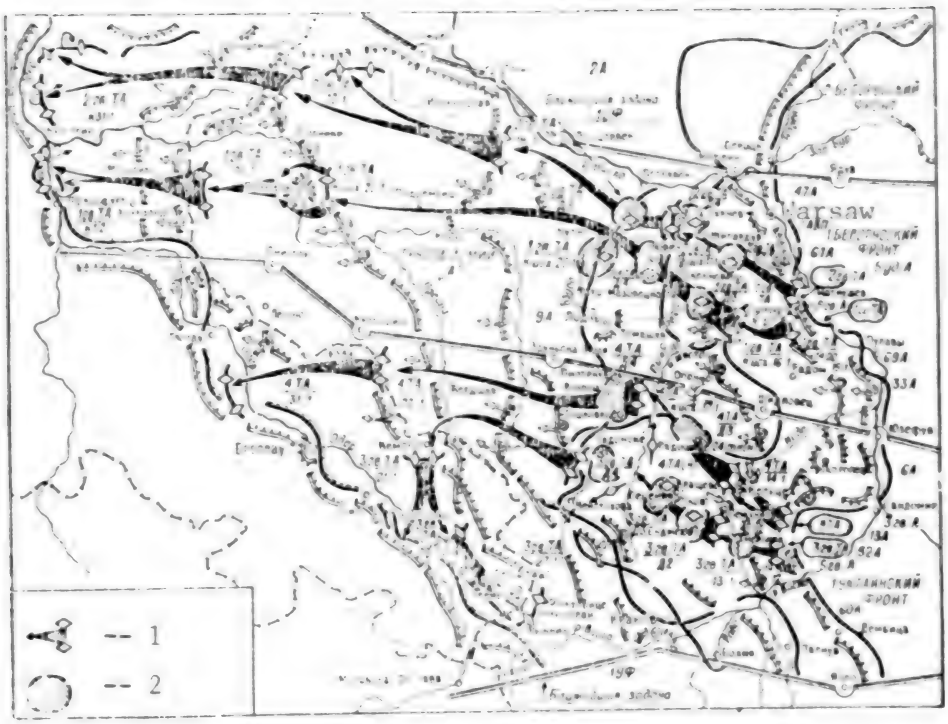
Use of Tank Armies

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 85 (signed to press 24 Dec 84) pp 35-37

[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Col N. Kireyev: "The Employment of Tank Armies in the Vistula-Oder Operation"]

[Text] In the Vistula-Oder Operation, the troops of the fronts included four tank armies which had over 3,000 tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount]. Their employment was influenced by the overall plan of Hq SHC for the operation, by the nature of enemy defenses and by the terrain conditions (see the diagram).

The commander of the First Belorussian Front decided to commit the 2d and 1st Guards Tank Armies to the engagement on the sector of the front's main thrust, respectively, in the zones of the 5th Attack and 8th Guards Armies after the first echelon rifle formations had broken through the enemy tactical defensive zone to its entire depth. This was aimed at establishing good conditions for the tank armies for rapidly developing the offensive. Initially their main mission was to come out in the rear of the enemy Warsaw grouping in order to



Tank Army Operations in the Vistula-Oder Operation

Key: 1--Combat operations of tank armies
2--Combat missions of tank armies according to operation's plan

help the all-arms armies in rapidly liberating the Polish capital of Warsaw as well as cutting off and eliminating the enemy defending in this area. The tank armies were to reach the line of the front's immediate mission 5 days before the all-arms armies. Characteristic in the plan was that the 2d Guards Tank Army was to be committed after the troop formations of the 5th Attack Army had crossed the Pilica River on the opposite bank of which ran a second enemy defensive zone.

The commander and staff of the First Ukrainian Front planned to commit the tank armies to the engagement depending upon the course of breaking through the enemy tactical defensive zone. If the first echelon all-arms armies broke through the enemy defenses quickly, the tank armies were to be committed to the breach for developing the offensive in the operational depth. But under conditions where the rifle formations were unable to break through the entire tactical zone on the first day of the operation, a portion of the forces from the tank army corps were to be employed to complete the breakthrough. The latter version was worked out fully and because of this it was the main one in their employment on this front. Such an employment of the tank field forces was necessitated by the breaking through of the enemy defenses at a rapid pace in order to deprive it of the possibility of attempting to check the offensive by the front's troops, in holding on to the Silesian Industrial Area which at that time played an enormous role in the economy of Nazi Germany.

Artillery support for the committing of the tank armies was the duty of those all-arms armies in whose zones the tanks were to be committed. Ahead of the start line of the tank field forces, where enemy resistance could be expected because of the nature of the terrain, sectors were prepared for the successive concentration of fire. For supporting combat after the commitment, artillery brigades made up of artillery breakthrough divisions were assigned to the tank armies. In the interests of their continuous air support and dependable cover against enemy air strikes, formations of the different aviation branches were put under the army commanders.

The success of committing the tank armies and their subsequent combat depended largely upon engineer support. For this purpose they employed both front resources as well as the engineer troops of those all-arms armies where the mobile groups were to be committed.

In the course of the 4-month preparation for combat, the military councils of the armies, the commanders and staffs of all levels carried out great work to prepare the personnel, weapons and combat equipment for the forthcoming battles. Various exercises and tactical drills were conducted in the units and formations and forced marches were carried out. The main emphasis was put on training the troops for a rapid offensive, away from the main forces and to a great depth.

On 12 January, the tank armies of the First Ukrainian Front which were in the jump-off positions at the Sandomierz bridgehead, at 1400 hours were committed to battle and together with rifle formations, artillery and aviation completed the breakthrough of the main zone of enemy defense, in cooperation with the all-arms armies they defeated the nearby operational enemy reserves and pushed deeper.

The tank armies of the First Belorussian Front which were on the eastern bank of the Vistula, with the going over of the front's troops to the offensive on 14 January, began crossing to the Magnuszew bridgehead to take up the areas from which they were to be committed to the breakthrough. In advancing to the west and northwest, the tank field forces cut off the Warsaw enemy grouping from the main forces of Army Group "A," without a pause they crossed a series of water obstacles, they cut several defensive lines in depth and, rapidly developing the offensive, at the end of January reached the Oder with their forward units, crossed it with the motorized infantry forces and captured bridgeheads.

The tank formations pursued the enemy in wide areas, during the day and at night, to a great depth, in close operation with the supporting aviation and at a rapid pace. This pace usually significantly surpassed the rate of retreat for the enemy troop groupings. As a result these groupings were broken up into pieces and deprived of the possibility of the organized occupying of the deeper defensive lines.

We should also note the experience of organizing and carrying out the crossing of water obstacles by the tank armies in the course of developing the offensive. With a depth of advance of 400-700 km, the tank formations each crossed 5-6 medium and large rivers such as the Nida, Pilica, Bzura, Warta, Prosna, Oder

as well as a significant number of small rivers. A predominant majority of the water obstacles was crossed without a pause. This was ensured by the actions of the forward detachments to capture bridgeheads before the approach of the main forces of the corps; by the early preparation of the personnel and equipment for the crossing of water barriers; by the prompt organization of reconnaissance and by conducting this simultaneously on a broad front; by a dependable air cover for the crossing areas and its all-round support. At the same time, in a number of instances a crossing was carried out in a complicated and tense situation.

In the course of the development of the offensive, the tank armies did not engage in combat for large population points and strong centers of resistance, they bypassed them and kept to the deep rear.

In line with the rapid advance of the tank armies, for maintaining cooperation with them by the rifle corps and sometimes the all-arms armies, forward detachments were sent out and these were a sort of connecting link, filling in the gap which had formed between the mobile groups and the first echelon rifle formations of the front's troops.

Noteworthy in the employment of the tank armies in the operation was also that on each front two tank armies fought on one operational sector. Here they conducted a series of maneuvers shifting their efforts to new sectors.

The experience of employing tank armies during the offensive by the Soviet troops in January 1945 between the Vistula and Oder has basically not lost its importance under present-day conditions. Its profound study and employment can contribute significantly to the further development of the theory of operational art and will play an invaluable role in the practice of the operational training of the troops and staffs.

Kolibernov on Engineering Support

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 85 (signed to press 24 Dec 84) pp 38-43

[Article by Doctor of Military Sciences, Professor, State Prize winner, Col Gen Ye. Kolibernov: "Characteristic Features of Engineering Support for Troops of the Fronts During the Vistula-Oder Operation"]

[Text] The offensive by the troops of the fronts in the Vistula-Oder Operation commenced with the breakthrough of the previously prepared and deeply echeloned enemy defenses. In engineer terms the most developed were the defenses in front of the bridgeheads from which the main thrusts were to be made. This necessitated the concentration of large forces of engineer troops. Thus, the First Belorussian Front (the chief of engineer troops, Lt Gen Engr Trps A. I. Proshlyakov) received as reinforcements two assault combat engineer brigades, a pontoon bridge brigade, a motorized engineer brigade and a combat engineer brigade, two pontoon bridge regiments and six individual pontoon bridge battalions of the

RVGK [Reserve of Supreme High Command].[1] The First Ukrainian Front (chief of the engineer troops, Lt Gen Engr Trps I. P. Galitskiy) received two assault brigades, one combat engineer brigade and two pontoon bridge brigades as well as two pontoon bridge battalions of the RVGK.[2] As a total there were 321 individual different battalions in the rifle corps and divisions of the two fronts considering the TOE front and army engineer formations and the troops units and subunits.[3]

The allocation of engineer troops on the fronts was determined by the particular features of conducting the front's operations. Thus, on the First Belorussian Front the main forces of the engineer troops were assigned to the armies of the attack groupings. Only five engineer battalions and subunits of the 27th Defensive Construction Directorate remained in the front's reserve. On the First Ukrainian Front, the diagonal configuration of the Oder River was considered in relation to the axis of the offensive and consequently the probability of the different time that the armies reached the water obstacle. For this reason, in the aim of reinforcing the field forces a strong engineer reserve of the front was established (the 3d and 6th Pontoon Bridge Brigades of the RVGK). For supporting the flanks of the attack grouping of the First Ukrainian Front they planned to use as mobile obstacle construction detachments [POZ] the battalions from the 42d Motorized and 16th Assault Combat Engineer Brigades.[4] On the First Belorussian Front for these purposes they assigned two battalions from the 2d Guards Motorized Engineer Brigade.

In allocating the engineer troops, the principle of massing them on the sectors of the main thrust was clearly observed. For example, on the First Belorussian Front, 51 percent of all the engineer forces, including up to 75 percent of the pontoon bridge units, were concentrated in the main (Magnuszew) attack troop grouping. As a result here they achieved a density of up to 17 engineer companies per kilometer of breakthrough sector.[5] On the First Ukrainian Front this was 13 engineer companies per kilometer of breakthrough sector.

A particular feature of the preparation of the engineer troops for actions in the course of the operation was that for the first time, in anticipating the forthcoming breakthrough of the enemy fortified areas, the tank armies prepared assault groups.

Supporting the regroupings of the troops and equipping the jump-off areas comprised an important place in carrying out engineer measures during the preparatory stage of the operation. A characteristic trait of employing the engineer troops in carrying out these tasks was the rigid centralization of their command on a level of operational field forces. Moreover, there also was their clearly expressed focus on carrying out road and bridge construction with, for example, up to 80 percent of the engineer units and formations under the army and front being assigned to this on the First Ukrainian Front.[6]

In the aim of supporting the moving up of the troops from the concentration areas to the crossings, each all-arms army prepared up to six routes and four were prepared for every tank army. In addition, at the bridgeheads the engineer units built a large number of column tracks. For example, just on the Sandomierz bridgehead their total length was 315 km and as a total in the area of the First Ukrainian Front some 1,500 km of roads were prepared.[7] Simultaneously,

for communications with the bridgeheads in the area of the two fronts, 26 major bridges on rigid supports were erected across the Vistula with 18 of them having a load capacity of 30-60 tons and 8 had 16 tons.[8] Up to one engineer battlion was assigned to each bridge crossing for rebuilding them after the destructive spring breaking up of the ice and for maintaining them. Such a number of crossings made it possible to move significant forces of our troops up to the bridgeheads in a comparatively short time.

One other particular feature of the engineer organization on the bridgeheads of the jump-off areas for the first echelon attack groupings of the fronts was that this was carried out under the guise of a further reinforcing of the defenses and consisted in the additional erection of shelters and increasing the capacity of the trench system in the first defensive area as well as increasing the network of command and observation posts and firing positions for the artillery.

As a total on the three bridgeheads by the start of the operation some 2,377 km of trenches were dug with a density up to 9.4 km per km of front, 8,337 weapons emplacements were equipped, 3,226 command and observation posts were set up and 18,887 shelters were built for the personnel.[9]

The engineer troops carried out extensive mine-clearing work on the bridgeheads. All the minefields deep in the jump-off areas were removed. This made it possible to covertly deploy the large attack groupings of the fronts on comparatively limited areas.

Significant contingents of engineer troops in preparing for the operation were employed in carrying out engineer measures for surprise and deception as carried out on the fronts upon instructions of Hq SHC.[10]

Ensuring the breakthrough of the enemy tactical defensive zone was the most complicated task of the engineer troops in the course of the operation. The presence of a wide strip of mixed minefields[11] and non-explosive obstacles in the neutral zone, on likely tank approaches and deep in the enemy defenses required the involvement of significant engineer forces for crossing them and these forces operated as obstacle-clearing groups. For these purposes all the first echelon rifle corps from the attack groupings of the fronts received as reinforcements two or three engineer battalions, as a rule, from the assault combat engineer brigades.[12]

A particular feature of clearing passages in the given operation was the fact that in the enemy obstacles these were initially cleared for the forward battalions and subsequently their network was extended in the aim of supporting the passage of the main forces of the formations. For carrying out the last mission each first echelon company of the assault battalions included an obstacle clearing group made up of a combat engineer squad and a sub-machine gunner squad.[13] On the First Belorussian Front, for clearing passages they also employed the 166th and 92d Tank-Engineer Regiments of minesweeping tanks. These ensured the crossing of the minefields for two tank brigades and seven tank and self-propelled artillery regiments in the course of breaking through the defenses.

The following example makes it possible to judge the scope of the obstacle clearing work carried out. In the breakthrough sectors of the First Belorussian Front, a total of 2,000 passages were cleared (of these over 800 in enemy minefields). Here the obstacle clearing groups under difficult winter conditions removed and detonated more than 90,000 antitank and antipersonnel mines.

For the fighting of the mobile groups, a range of measures was carried out and this included mineclearing and equipping of the routes of advance from the forward edge to the start-lines, the covering of the flanks by the POZ forces and checking the minelaying on the deployment lines. Four routes were built for a tank army and two or three for a separate tank corps. Assigned to each route was from a combat engineer company to a battalion and these, in advancing behind the forward units, marked the route, built crosses over obstacles and trenches and widened the passages in the enemy minefields. On selected routes three or four solid widened passages were built across a zone of mixed minefields.[14] The TOE engineer units and formations of the tank armies and corps were responsible for the tasks of supporting the movement of the tank columns over the prepared routes.

Characteristically, in the committing of the 2d Guards Tank Army of the First Belorussian Front to battle, its deployment line was beyond the Pilica River. A strong grouping of engineer troops (the 4th Pontoon Bridge Regiment, three pontoon bridge battalions and three combat engineer battalions) were moved up to this water obstacle for promptly establishing bridge crossings of the necessary capacity (the high-speed construction of four bridges with a load capacity of 60 tons).[15] All of this made it possible for the tank army formations to be moved across without reducing the rate of their advance to the start line.

As a result of the measures carried out, the committing of the four tank armies and the five separate tank corps to battle on the first-third day of the operation was carried out in an organized manner and without losses of armored equipment in the minefields.

After breaching the enemy defenses on the Vistula, an important task for engineer support was the establishing of conditions for the rapid development of the offensive in the aim of crossing the entire system of enemy rear defensive lines without a pause. The high rates of troop advance in this operation to a significant degree would depend upon the successful crossing of numerous water obstacles, including such a strategic line as the Oder River. As an average the troops of the fronts had to cross one water obstacle every 50-90 km. Regardless of the fact that the operation was conducted in winter, the crossing of rivers covered with an ice sheet from 10-25 cm thick would have been impossible without establishing a system of crossings for heavy equipment, particularly the tanks and SAU [self-propelled artillery mount]. Under these conditions, the successful advance of the attack groupings with the successive crossing of water obstacles was achieved: by the assigning and rapid advance to them of the forward detachments, the reconnaissance and engineer-reconnaissance groups in the aim of capturing enemy crossings, and by moving up the basic grouping of engineer resources (particularly the pontoo n bridge) behind the forward detachments and in front of the columns of main forces. It was essential to establish a strong reserve of pontoon bridge equipment and their flexible maneuvering in the aim of strengthening the troops on sectors where the

greatest success had been achieved. A great deal depended also upon the effective elaboration and extensive employment of methods for the rapid construction of low-level floating bridges and erecting floating bridges under the special wintertime conditions.

It must be pointed out that for increasing the independence of the tank armies in the course of developing the offensive, they were reinforced not only by tank-engineer units but also pontoon bridge ones. Each forward detachment of the tank field forces included from a combat engineer company up to an engineer battalion with mine-laying and mine-clearing equipment and bridge elements, and in certain instances also pontoon bridge battalions from the motorized engineer brigades of the tank armies or attached pontoon bridge regiments.[16] For capturing bridges in the course of the operation extensive use was also made of engineer reconnaissance subunits and groups the personnel of which independently destroyed the enemy security and demolition teams.

After the forward detachments had captured the bridgeheads, all the available engineer resources of the armies and, when necessary, the front engineer reserve were immediately moved up to the water obstacle. This made it possible to deploy in exceptionally short times the necessary network of various types of crossings to ensure the crossing of the river by the main forces of the field forces without a pause. From the experience of the operation, such a goal was usually achieved by establishing in the zone of each army some 3-5 ice crossings for the infantry and 3-4 bridge crossings, at least 2 having a load capacity of 40-60 tons.[17] For example, on the Warta River alone, for the crossing of the main forces of the attack grouping from the First Ukrainian Front, 32 bridges were build, erected and captured and 13 fords and 13 ice crossings were established.[18]

In carrying out this mission an important place was also held by the maneuvering of engineer resources depending upon the developing operational situation. Thus, in approaching the Oder, the engineer reserve of the First Ukrainian Front was moved up into the zones of advance of the armies which were to be the first to break through to this important strategic line. Subsequently, when success had been achieved on the right wing of the front, the 3d Pontoon Bridge Brigade was relocated into the area of the 52d Army and the 6th Brigade into the area of the 13th and 4th Tank Armies. This provided the successful crossing of the troops and their concentration on a bridgehead to the north of Breslau (Wroclaw).

The construction of low-level and floating bridges in the course of the operation was carried out, as a rule, on a broad front and directly from the ice. After the assembly of the floating bridges openings were made in the ice. This reduced the time of erecting them. For example, a bridge with a load capacity of 60 tons and a length of 120 linear meters across the Pilica River in the area of Palczew was built in 7.5 hours by three engineer battalions using pre-fab structural elements.[19]

The crossing of water obstacles by the all-arms field forces was carried out most successfully where the army reserve of crossing equipment moved up behind the tank formations operating out front. Thus, in the 13th Army such a reserve was moved up promptly to the Oder under the cover of the 4th Tank Army corps which had pushed forward.

Although in the course of the rapid offensive the system of enemy defensive lines was basically crossed without a pause, however on a number of sectors the enemy endeavored to organize resistance. In these instances the troop and attached engineer units cleared passages in the enemy obstacles and fought as part of the assault detachments and groups in the aim of blowing up the enemy pillboxes (DOS).

Engineer support for repelling enemy counterstikes and the retaining of captured lines was of important significance in the final stage of the operation. The problem was that on the First Belorussian Front in the course of the offensive, the task had arisen of covering the northern wing between the Vistula and the Oder against the counterstrikes being readied by the enemy Pomeranian grouping and holding on to the bridgeheads on the Oder on the Berlin sector. On the First Ukrainian Front the need arose of covering the attack grouping from the south. In carrying out these missions the main thing in the actions of the engineer troops and particularly their POZ, was extensive minelaying in the field and with a shortage of engineer ammunition the setting of mines directly on the combat runs of the enemy tanks. Often they were subsequently repeatedly relaid on the most dangerous sectors. The scale of employing mixed minefields set by the engineer troops in carrying out the designated missions can be judged from the fact that just in covering the left wing of the First Ukrainian Front in the course of the operation, over 131,000 mines and up to 2,000 various landmines were set.[20] In the minefields the enemy counterstrike groupings in the area of this front suffered significant losses: 244 tanks and assault guns, 79 armored personnel carriers, 215 motor vehicles and around 5,000 soldiers and officers were blown up.[21]

In the course of the operation, the engineer troops of the fronts cleared the mines out of several thousand population points in Central and Southern Poland, including such major cities as Warsaw and Krakow. In particular, for clearing the mines out of the Polish capital, Warsaw, in addition to other engineer units, the 2d and 5th Combat Engineer Brigades of the Polish Army and the 1st Guards Motorized Engineer Brigade of the RVGK were employed. In close cooperation, the Soviet and Polish combat engineers cleared in this city around 100 governmental and scientific-cultural objects, over 2,300 buildings and 70 squares. Here around 85,000 various mines, 280 booby traps and around 50 powerful land mines were deactivated and an enormous quantity of grenades, bombs and shells was collected and detonated.

In conclusion it must be pointed out that the massing of the resources of the engineer troops on the sectors of the main thrusts made it possible to promptly carry out all the necessary measures related to engineer support for the operation. Under the conditions of the rapid development of the offensive by large tank forces to a great depth, the main task of the engineer troops was to provide them prompt aid in crossing the numerous water obstacles without a pause. Particularly useful in this regard was the work done by the engineer reconnaissance groups which were part of the forward detachments. The moving up of the pontoon bridge and engineer units with the first echelons of the advancing troops and with a mobile reserve of bridge elements ensured the prompt creation and augmentation of the necessary system of crossings.

Also of great importance was the maneuvering of the mixed minefields carried out by the POZ and the engineer reserves in repelling enemy counterattacks and counterstrikes in the final stage of the operation.

The motherland had high praise for the contribution of the engineer troops to the achieving of the operation's goals. For the greatest self-sacrifice and valor, 48 combat engineers and pontoon bridge troops were given the high title of Hero of the Soviet Union while several thousand received orders and medals. Many engineer units were commended in the numerous orders of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and were awarded governmental awards and honorific designators of Warsaw, Krakow, Oder and others.

FOOTNOTES

[1] TsAMO SSSR, folio 69, inv. 272735, file 21, sheets 117, 146-147.

[2] Ibid., file 24, sheet 68.

[3] "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voyenizdat, Vol 4, 1959, p 119.

[4] TsAMO, folio 69, inv. 12111, file 2461, sheets 6-7.

[5] "Inzhenernyye voyska v boyakh za Sovetskuyu Rodinu" [The Engineer Troops in the Battles for the Soviet Motherland], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1970, p 289.

[6] TsAMO, folio 69, inv. 272735, file 23, sheet 76.

[7] "Inzhenernyye voyska v boyakh...," p 292.

[8] "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh...," Vol 4, pp 120-121.

[9] Ibid., p 120.

[10] For more detail on surprise and deception, see: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 1, 1975, pp 10-21.

[11] The mining density of the main area reached 2,000-3,000 mines per kilometer of front.

[12] TsAMO, folio 69, inv. 28975, file 56, sheet 2.

[13] Ibid., folio 233, inv. 265436, file 2, sheets 192-193.

[14] Ibid., folio 69, inv. 28975, file 54, sheet 84.

[15] Ibid., inv. 272735, file 21, sheet 190.

[16] "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu opyta voyny" [Collection of Materials on Studying the Experience of the War], Moscow, Voyenizdat, No 25, 1946, p 116.

[17] TsAMO, folio 233, inv. 265436, file 2, sheets 234-248.

[18] Ibid., folio 69, inv. 272735, file 23, sheet 142.

[19] Ibid., inv. 28975, file 52, sheets 77-78.

[20] Ibid., inv. 272735, file 23, sheets 237.

[21] I. P. Galitskiy, "Dorogu otkryvali sapery" [The Combat Engineers Open Up the Road], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1983, p 255.

Technical Support for Armor

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 85 (signed to press 24 Dec 84) pp 44-49

[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Col (Ret) V. Syropyatov: "Certain Questions of Tank Technical Support in the Vistula-Oder Operation*"]

[Text] For carrying out the tasks of tank technical support in the operation, strong groupings were established of repair and salvage facilities (see the table) numbering over 86 repair and salvage units. This was more than 30 percent of all the repair and salvage units on the Soviet-German Front by the beginning of January 1945.[1] Moreover, each front, each tank army as well as certain all-arms armies which included separate tank units and formations had armored equipment dumps which supplied the troops and repair units with spare parts and assemblies. From the RVGK, the fronts each received their own field collection-distribution point (PSRP) which were specifically designed to disassemble irrepairable tanks. Such a saturating of the tank and mechanized units and formations with repair and salvage facilities fully ensured the maintaining of their battleworthiness in the course of the operation.

The experience of the repairing of armored equipment in the 1944 operations showed that the existing organizational structure of the repair units did not fully meet the developing conditions of the combat situation. Having reviewed the proposals of the commander of the armored and mechanized troops [BTiMV], Hq SHC in October 1944 took a decision to systematize the repair unit staffs. In November-December of that year, in accord with the Directive of the General Staff of 11 November, the troop repair units were systematized in the aim of further strengthening specialization and increasing the production capacity of the repair units and subunits.

In particular, the numberous repair bases which had a varying organization were transformed into mobile tank repair bases and mobile motor vehicle repair bases.

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* The article examines tank maintenance chiefly for the tank (mechanized) corps and armies.

Table

Distribution of Repair and Salvage Facilities in Fronts

Fronts	No. of Tanks and SAU	Number of Repair and Salvage Units							
		PTRZ / PTARZ	ptrb	otrb	PAREB / BTRP	Salvage Company	Salvage Detachment	SPAM	Total
First Belorussian	3815*	-/1	13	5	2/-	9	2	5	37***
First Ukrainian	3638**	2/1	11	10	2/1	13	1	8	49****
Total		2/2	24	15	4/1	22	3	13	86

* TsAMO SSSR, folio 38, inv. 11353, file 280, sheet 105
** Ibid.
*** Ibid., inv. 11371, file 346, sheets 148-150.
**** Ibid., file 569, sheet 1; file 492, sheets 52, 53.

SAU--Self-propelled artillery mount
PTRZ--Field tank repair shop
PTARZ--Field tank equipment repair shop
ptrb--Field tank repair base
otrb--Separate tank repair base
PAREB--Field motor vehicle repair and salvage base
BTRP--Armored repair point
SPAM--Damaged vehicle collection point

The separate and army repair-rebuilding battalions were changed into separate tank repair battalions while the repair-rebuilding battalions of the mechanized corps became mobile tank repair and mobile motor vehicle repair bases.[2] As a result there was a sharp reduction in the number of TOE for the repair units (5 instead of 14). Strict specialization of the repair units was carried out for three main specialtie: the repair of tanks (SAU), the repair of tanks and their units and for repairing only tank units. Production capacity of the transformed repair units of the tank armies and corps increased by approximately 50 percent.

During the period of preparing for the operation, the tank maintenance bodies of the fronts together with the command did great work to improve the technical condition of the fleet of combat vehicles in order to maximally reduce tank and SAU failure due to technical factors.

Due to the fact that the tank units and formations of the fronts had received a large number of tanks and SAU directly from the plants, the need arose to carry out not only maintenance but also to check the fastenings of the assemblies and units as well as the adjustment parameters on all combat vehicles.

In planning tank technical support for the troops, the repair facilities of the troop units (RTO [maintenance company], VTO [maintenance platoon]) of the First Belorussian Front (deputy BTiMV commander for repairs and supply, Engr-Col A. S. Karpenko) were given the mission: carrying out routine repairs on the tanks and readying them for combat, not allowing them to fall more than 10 km behind their units. The corps repair facilities were to be located not more than 20 km away from the fighting units and the army ones not more than 30 km. If tanks requiring repairs were over 30 km away from the fighting units, they were to be turned over to the repair battalions and bases or the SPAM of the front.[3] The first echelon all-arms armies were given the front repair units. The front's BTiMV commander concentrated his reserve (the 60th and 118th otrb and the 76th and 152d ptrb) in the combat area of the main grouping. The 1st and 2d Guards Tank Armies fighting from the Magnuszew bridgehead were provided with TOE salvage facilities while the IX and XI Tank Corps which advanced from the Pulawy bridgehead were given the front salvage detachment No 71. The supply of the tank corps and armies with armored equipment was to be carried out from two mobile detachments from the BTI [armored equipment] dump of the front and these should not be more than 50 km from the forward units.[4]

On the First Ukrainian Front (deputy BTiMV commander for repair and supply, Maj Gen V. V. Orlovskiy), the repair and salvage equipment was basically assigned to the armies while a portion was in the reserve of the front. The main repair and salvage units were deployed behind the all-arms and tank armies making the main thrust.

In the first and second guards tank armies and in the all-arms armies, the assigned repair and salvage facilities were to be used on a centralized basis, while in the 3d Guards and 4th Tank Armies, on a decentralized basis. Each corps in the 4th Tank Army (deputy army commander for technical affairs, Engr-Col V. M. Lyapishev) which did not have its own tractors for salvage, were assigned four tractors each from the salvage company and a platoon of repair workers from the 155th otrb of the army. The attached repair facilities were to carry out medium repairs on tanks at the corps SPAM. In the 3d Guards Tank Army (deputy army commander for technical affairs, Maj Gen Engr-Tank Serv Yu. N. Solov'yev), each corps was assigned as reinforcements three repair shops from the army 41st otrb.

Due to the high rate of advance, the daily operating time of the tanks and SAU in the tank armies was very significant. Any opportunities were used for milage servicing of the tanks in the units and formations. Usually 2 or 3 days were spent for this. For example, in the 3d Guards Tank Army a technical inspection No 2 involving the repair facilities of the brigades, corps and even the army was carried out on 1-2 February, only after completing the battles in the area of Gleiwitz and Hindenberg and the formations had reached the area of Gross Strelitz. In the 4th Tank Army, a short halt of the tanks due to a lack of fuel on the right bank of the Oder was employed for carrying out a technical inspection No 2 and bringing up the vehicles which had fallen behind. A full technical inspection No 2 of the tanks and SAU could be carried out by all the tank armies only upon the completion of the operation.

The scattering of the repair facilities over large areas--from the forward edge to the deep rear--necessitated a change in the organization of technical

reconnaissance for the repair supplies of the tanks and SAU as well as the salvaging of damaged vehicles. The methods were improved of delivering the overhauled tanks from the deep rear to the battle formations of the units.

In the 1st Guards Tank Army (deputy army commander for technical affairs, Engr-Col P. G. Dyner), the repair facilities of the brigades and corps, in carrying out the order of the BTiMV commander of the First Belorussian Front, were constantly on the move and carried out virtually no tank repairs. As a result, the number of vehicles requiring repairs constantly increased and by 18 January was around 100 units. During this time the army tank repair battalion had repaired 26 tanks and SAU.[5] Since the army formations were continuing their rapid advance, the amount of vehicles needing repair in the rear continued to increase. In this situation a decision was taken as of 18 January to temporarily put under the Directorate for Armored Supply and Repair [UTBSiR] the corps ptrb and organize their operation at the army SPAM where they began to concentrate the equipment requiring repair. The army SPAM carried out medium and a portion of the routine repair of the tanks and SAU. The attention of the technical divisions of the corps, the technical units of the brigades and technical support companies was focused on carrying out routine repair and organizing the maintenance of the combat vehicles.

As a total from the Vistula to the Oder, 8 SPAM and several affiliates were deployed in the 1st Guards Tank Army. The SPAM were positioned a distance of 30-200 km and more from the forward units. The period of work at each line was 3-9 days. The SPAM where a great deal of equipment was concentrated maintained contact with the UBTSiR of the army by aircraft and special messenger. Responsible representatives from the directorate were located at all the SPAM for supervision and help. Due to the emergency measures taken in 4 days (18-21 January) 83 tanks and SAU were overhauled in the army (medium and routine repair).[6] Thus, the centralized employment of repair facilities of the corps provided an opportunity to utilize the repair units more productively for rebuilding the army tanks and SAU.

Approximately the same situation developed in the 2d Guards Tank Army (deputy army commander for technical affairs, Maj Gen Engr-Tank Serv N. P. Yukin). By 20 January, 126 tanks and SAU were out of service in the operation, and by 24 January, 194 tanks and SAU; these required routine and medium repairs.[7]

But the army repair facilities were extended more than 250 km along the routes.

It was decided that the 77th and 78th Salvage Companies would concentrate the damaged tanks at the army SPAM in Zirardow, Czarnkow, Sochaczew, Inowroclaw and Morgonin as well as at the corps SPAM, while the 75th otrb of the army would be deployed 150 km from the forward units in the area of Czarnkow and Morgonin. After completing the work of collecting the equipment to be repaired, both salvage companies followed behind the battle formations of the units and salvaged their damaged combat vehicles.

In the 3d Guards Tank Army, with the going over of the formation to pursuing the enemy, the technical departments of the corps headquarters became separated from the attached army repair facilities and were unable to effectively lead them. In order to avoid the stoppage of repair facilities, the army shops had to be

taken away from the corps and returned to the 41st otrb which subsequently was used on a centralized basis and developed its work at six army SPAM and their affiliates.[8]

An analogous situation existed in the 4th Tank Army. With the going over on 19 January of the army formations to pursuing the enemy, all the army repair facilities which had been attached to the corps were taken away and put under the commander of the 155th otrb.[9]

In line with the high rate of advance of the tank armies, it became difficult to deliver the overhauled tanks and SAU to the battle formations of the troops. In the 1st Guards Tank Army, for example, the overhauled vehicles were delivered to the units from the rear SPAM in columns of 15-20 vehicles. A column, as a rule, was accompanied by a repair shop. The routes ran through the SPAM located ahead and here the overhauled tanks underwent additional technical maintenance. The officers of the army UTBSiR constantly provided close supervision over the movement of the columns from aircraft.[10] In the 3d Guards Tank Army the overhauled tanks were dispatched to the formations in groups of from 3 to 10 vehicles. A repair shop or a tank truck brought up the rear of the column or fueling points were designated along the way.[11]

The units and formations were supplied with armored equipment, as in other operations, from the head departments of the army and front dumps and their mobile units. The mobile units usually had 30-50 tons of supplies and were located at the forward army SPAM. The army and front dumps of armored equipment did not move in the course of the operation.

In the work of the repair facilities in the Vistula-Oder Operation one can note two characteristic features. In the first place, one of the main sources of the supply of armored equipment for the troops and repair units was parts and units removed from unrepairable tanks. Secondly, more than one-half of the demand for repair parts in units was met by units which had been overhauled at the front PTARZ.

The high rate of advance of the troops was also substantially felt in organizing control over the resources of tank technical support. While on the corps--army--front level cipher messages were employed for brief reports on the availability and technical state of the equipment; but in the lower level such communications equipment did not exist. The obtaining of data from the units by field communications, that is, after 2-3 days, clearly did not satisfy the command. This necessitated changes in the procedure for receiving information.

The technical personnel of the units and formations engaged in organizing the servicing of the basic mass of tanks physically were unable to reconnoiter all the damaged and lagging tanks and SAU on the routes. For this reason the task of reconnoitering the equipment to be repaired under these conditions was assumed by the army UBTSiR. In the 1st Guards Tank Army, for example, by the end of each day the operations department of the staffs clarified the actual routes and axes of actions by the units over the last 24 hours and on the following morning 8-10 motor vehicles with officers from the UBTSiR, salvage companies, SPAM and repair units traveled out to reconnoiter the routes, having strictly determined missions.[12] Moreover, all the repair and salvage units of the armies

and fronts were given the duty of conducting reconnaissance of machines to be repaired and salvaged within a radius up to 25-30 km from their disposition and to submit the appropriate reports to the army (front) staff.

For maintaining effective communication with the commanders of the army-level repair and salvage units and for promptly receiving data on the equipment to be repaired and salvaged as well as the amount of overhauled and salvaged vehicles at the UBTSiR, the 3d Guards Tank Army kept messengers on duty around-the-clock with vehicles.[13] In the other tank armies, for clarifying data on the technical state of the equipment in the formations, UTBSiR officers were sent out daily.

In the Vistula-Oder Operation in all levels they continued to improve on all levels the by-number recording of damaged tanks and SAU; this had been recognized in 1944. Operational planning also was widely employed proceeding from the really existing machines to be repaired and the period of their rebuilding (3-5 days in the armies and 10 days in the fronts). In all the tank formations, the chiefs of a technical unit (department) began working out battle maps which recorded the position of the troops, the deployment of the repair and salvage pools of combat vehicles as well as the repair and salvage subunits at a specific time. At the UBTSiR of the tank armies, special battle maps were kept which showed the location of tanks and SAU which had broken down. Having such information and documents, it was easier to provide effective management of the tank technical support resources with the high rate of advance and the difficult operational and technical situation.

The successful carrying out of the tasks of tank technical support for the troops in the Vistula-Oder Operation was largely aided by the organized reinforcing of the repair units. As a result of this their production capacity increased significantly. Out of the total number of damaged combat vehicles, the repair facilities of the tank armies and fronts rebuilt approximately two-thirds.[14] In the tank armies in a day they repaired an average of 25-35 tanks and SAU, with a maximum of 50-70,[14] while in the fronts the figures were 190-210.[15] The repair units of the First Belorussian Front in January 1945 rebuilt 3,786[16] tanks and SAU and 4,267[17] tanks and SAU in the First Ukrainian Front. Such a rate of repair on armored equipment ensured during the entire operation that the level of combat capability of the tank units, formations and field forces would be properly maintained.

Combat experience showed that under the conditions of the rapid rate of advance, decentralization of the repair facilities was not effective. The bodies in command of technical support in these instances often became separated from the attached repair units and could not control them.

In the course of the highly fluid operations, great importance was assumed not only by dependable control of the technical support resources but also careful organization of the work of technical reconnaissance on all levels, the introduction of by-number registration of damaged combat vehicles and increased responsibility of the officials for prompt information on damaged tanks and SAU.

FOOTNOTES

[1] According to calculations of the author made on the basis of generalizing reports on tank technical support of the fronts and armies.

[2] TsAMO, folio 38, inv. 11371, file 158, sheets 38-39.

[3] Ibid., file 346, sheets 149-150.

[4] Ibid., inv. 11371, file 346, sheet 150.

[5] Ibid., folio 299, inv. 3067, file 95, sheet 18.

[6] Ibid., sheet 20.

[7] Ibid., folio 307, inv. 4163, file 83, sheet 6.

[8] Ibid., folio 315, inv. 4457, file 95, sheet 20.

[9] Ibid., folio 323, inv. 4756, file 122, sheet 195.

[10] Ibid., folio 299, inv. 3067, file 95, sheet 56.

[11] Ibid., folio 315, inv. 370653, file 1, sheet 30.

[12] Ibid., folio 299, inv. 3067, file 95, sheet 63.

[13] Ibid., folio 315, inv. 4457, file 32, sheet 195.

[14] Ibid., folio 323, inv. 4756, file 122, sheet 201.

[15] Ibid., inv. 2309, file 144, sheet 155; inv. 11371, file 492, sheet 9.

[16] Ibid., folio 38, inv. 11371, file 434, sheet 57.

[17] Ibid., file 441, sheet 69.

Prior, On-Going Communications Organization

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 85 (signed to press 24 Dec 84) pp 50-52

[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Maj Gen N. Konichev: "The Organization of Signals in the Preparations and Course of the Vistula-Oder Operation"]

[Text] For ensuring dependable command of the troops during the operation, the fronts included a large amount of communications resources. During the period of preparing for the operation, the line signals units did enormous work to

build the wire communications lines. Before the start of the offensive, the signals troops of the First Ukrainian Front alone built 700 km of new lines and rebuilt 1,060 km of overhead telegraph and telephone lines and hung 2,160 km of wire on the previously existing lines.

In organizing line communications in the First Belorussian Front, provision was made for building the following: the main communications artery of the front running between Warsaw, Lowicz and Poznan with a capacity of 10 wires (not counting the two HF [high frequency] circuits); an auxiliary artery of Warka, Grojec, Lowicz with a capacity of 6 wires (plus one HF circuit); 8 army communications links with 4 wires in each and one HF circuit; 6 lateral lines crossing the main artery at the points of the assumed command posts of the front with 4-6 wires in each; the rebuilding of the underground cable line of 48 strands (12 x 4) along the route Praga, Warsaw, Lowicz, Kutno, Poznan. As a total the signal troops of the front had to build around 400 km of new lines and rebuild more than 3,400 km and string almost 20,000 km of wire and cable on them. There were insignificant particular features in the organization of line communications on the First Ukrainian Front.

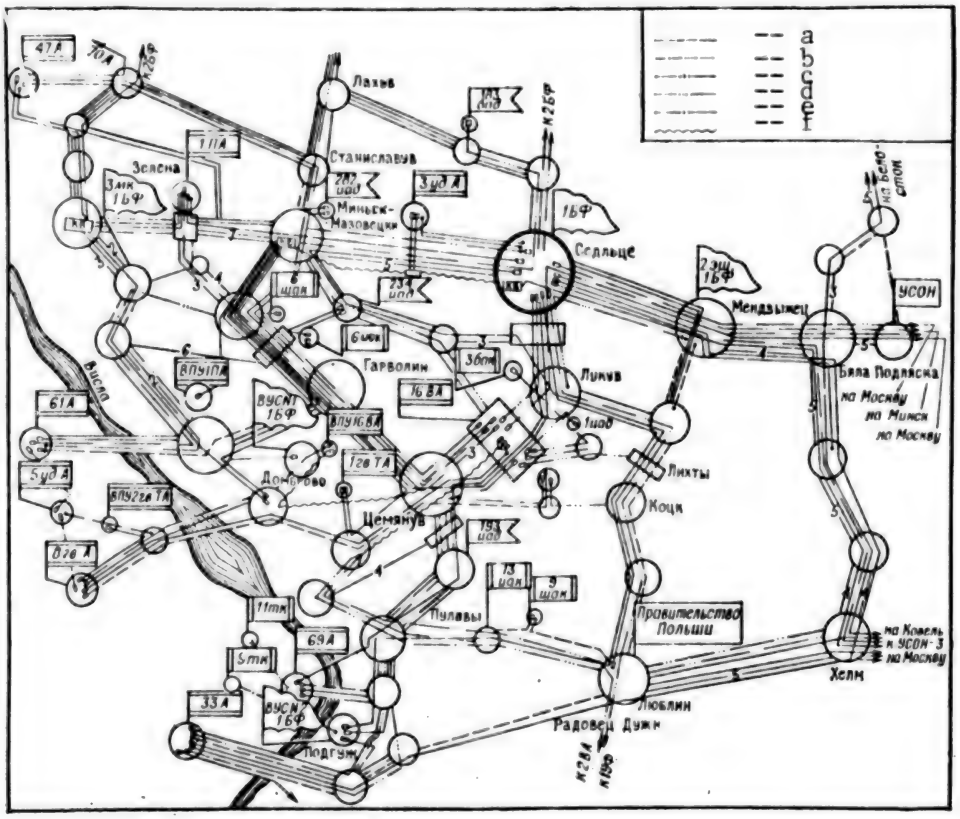

Diagram of Line Telecommunications of First Belorussian Front (January 1945)

Key: a--Telegraph wires and alternates
b--Telephone circuits
c--Contact with Red Army General Staff
d--Communications with Air Forces
e--Poled cables
f--Underground cable

A large number of the cable communications lines had been laid on the bridgeheads: on the Magnuszew, for example, almost 6,000 km and on the Pulawy, 3,500 km.[1] In order to protect them against damage, they had been laid in specially dug trenches and ditches. By the start of the operation, the permanent communications lines had been brought as close as possible to the forward edge. For communications with the bridgeheads across the Vistula, the front signals units of the First Belorussian Front alone had built 14 pole overhead crossings.[2] Some 200-300 m from each crossing over the river were laid field and 4-strand cables for a back-up.

For building the wire communications lines in the course of the offensive, some 6,500 poles and 5,700 km of wire with fittings had been transported to the bridgeheads of the First Belorussian Front.[3] Such a supply of building materials ensured the construction and rebuilding of the communications lines along a front of 180-200 km and up to 300 km in depth, and considering the local resources, to 500 km.

On both fronts dependable line communications were provided for liaison between the armies and aviation. For example, on the First Belorussian Front, up to 30 percent of the front wires were allocated to the 16th Air Army. The staffs of the all-arms and tank armies, in addition to communications with the staff of the 16th Air Army, had telegraph communications with the staffs of the air formations supporting them.

With the going over of the troops to the offensive on the main arteries of the fronts, the line communications equipment was unified under the general leadership of the chief of the front's communications artery, and on the army links this was the chief of army communications.

In the course of the operation, reconstruction work was carried out simultaneously on several sectors of the lines. Each repair-reconstruction team was provided with motor transport and this made it possible to increase the rate of building and repairing the communications lines. On those links where it was impossible to restore the permanent lines within a day, cable and pole equipment was used.

Experience showed that the procurement of building materials on the spot played a major role in ensuring a high rate of construction and repair on the communications lines. For this purpose in the signals unit special teams were organized provided with transport. Nighttime was also widely used in the interests of construction.

The supply of radio equipment for the fronts by the start of the Vistula-Oder Operation was rather high. Thus, on the First Belorussian Front there were over 14,000 radios and on the First Ukrainian Front there were over 12,000 radios.[4] Radio communications was organized by radio links and nets. Radio links were organized with each army as well as separate tank and cavalry corps. For the all-arms armies fighting on the sector of the main thrust and for the tank field forces, additional duplex links were organized for bodo operations.

On the First Belorussian Front, for the first time a call station was organized to handle the radio calls of the front command and staff.[5] This was set up in

the area of the operations headquarters and made it possible to simultaneously carry on three radio telegraph calls and by a distributing frame it was possible to obtain any transmitter of a radio center. In the most distant formations they made it a practice of sending radios with a crew headed by the chief of the radio communications link.

The setting up of the radio centers of the fronts, the presence of a sufficient number of receivers and various radios and the use of directional antennas ensured extensive maneuvering in the radio nets and links of the fronts.

The high densities of radios per kilometer of front and the lack of frequency bands necessitated the moving of transmitters 3-4 km from the receiver center to avoid interference. In the course of the operation the distance between the transmitting and receiving centers increased up to 15-20 km.

Also considered was a possible maneuvering of the mobile formations along the front. In particular, there were plans to include their radios in any of the liaison nets.

The experience of the operation confirmed the advisability of establishing a radio call station, particularly in maintaining contact with the mobile troops, and showed that for the front radio nets it was essential to have powerful long-wave radios.

Mobile means of communications were also widely employed in the operation. In the course of combat, the mobile communications of the First Belorussian Front made 851 aircraft sorties (235,215 km), 1,097 vehicle trips (almost 50,000 km), and 925 motorcycle trips (around 9,400 km). Some 2,201,187 packets of various correspondence were handled by the report assembly points.[6]

As a whole the signal troops handled the complex tasks of providing communications. this was achieved due to the great work carried out in preparing the signal troops for the operation, to the skillful use of all types of communications and to the maneuvering of communications resources in the course of the operation.

FOOTNOTES

1 "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu opyta voyny" [Collection of Materials on Studying the Experience of the War], Moscow, Voyenizdat, No 25, 1947, p 169.

2 "Voyennyye svyazisty v dni voyny i mira" [Signal Troops During Days of War and Peace], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1968, p 230.

3 Ibid., p 231.

4 VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 2, 1980, p 21.

5 "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu...," No 25, p 177.

6 Ibid., p 179.

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YEVSEYEV REVIEWS FRUNZE'S MAIN POSITIONS ON MILITARY DOCTRINE

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 85 (signed to press 24 Dec 84) pp 53-63

[Article by Lt Gen A. Yevseyev: "The Military-Theoretical Views of M. V. Frunze"]

[Text] The Civil War had ended and the young Soviet republic entered a new period of its historical development, a period of peacetime construction. The party, the government and the people were confronted with the difficult tasks of rebuilding the destroyed economy and consolidating the state system. But under the conditions of the constant threat of armed attack by the imperialist powers, the carrying out of these tasks required the organizing of dependable defense of the socialist victories. "It must be remembered," said V. I. Lenin, "that we are always a hair's breadth away from all sorts of invasion."[1] For this reason there was the major problem of organizing armed forces which would be capable of securely defending the peaceful labor of the Soviet people. "The most dependable means of ensuring peace," said M. V. Frunze, "is the strengthening of the Red Army,"[2] "for, as our opponents will know that we possess a strong army they will be less willing to pierce our fortress by force...."[3]

The tasks of organizing the defense of the Soviet nation had to be carried out under unbelievably difficult conditions. The question of the organizational development of the armed forces of a socialist state in peacetime under the conditions of capitalist encirclement was a completely new one. Regardless of the fact that the international situation continued to remain tense and the threat of armed intervention was not completely eliminated, as a consequence of the extreme limitation of financial assets, the size of the Red Army was set at just 610,000 men, that is, almost 9-fold less than it was by the end of the war. The difficulty of establishing armed forces was that the work of generalizing the experience of World War I and the Civil War had still not been completed, there were no firm legal bases regulating army life and in addition the necessary unity of views was lacking on many questions of military affairs. Under these conditions, along with other prominent party leaders and responsible workers from the People's Commissariat for Military and Naval Affairs, M. V. Frunze with his inherent energy set to a theoretical elaboration of complex military-scientific problems.

The military-theoretical heritage of M. V. Frunze is quite extensive. In a relatively short period of time he was able to carry out extensive and fruitful

work on the development of many areas of Soviet military science the fundamentals of which had been set down in the works of V. I. Lenin and in the Communist Party documents and decisions.

A knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory and methodology and of the development trends in military affairs, rich personal combat experience gained in the course of the Civil War as well as constant hard work made it possible for M. V. Frunze to successfully carry out the task of examining the arising problems and placed him in the ranks of prominent military theoreticians. His works have rightly entered the treasurehouse of Soviet military science and have justifiably won great authority among military readers both in our nation and abroad. The ability to penetrate to the essence of the phenomena and events being investigated and to dialectically link theory with practice provided him with an opportunity to draw correct and far-reaching conclusions which have not lost their importance even under present-day conditions.

It can be said unerringly that the system of M. V. Frunze's military-theoretical views is an ordered scientific theory of war. All the concepts worked out by him are marked by great profundity and helped in successfully carrying out the tasks of military organizational development in the USSR. His articles and speeches are an inexhaustible source of military-theoretical thought.

M. V. Frunze made a significant contribution to working out Soviet military doctrine. Against the background of the military-theoretical dissension which arose after the end of the Civil War, his work "Yedinaya voyennaya doktrina i Krasnaya Armiya" [Unified Military Doctrine and the Red Army] published in mid-1921 was of enormous theoretical and organizational significance. "...The Red Army," wrote M. V. Frunze, "should be indoctrinated and trained on the basis of unified concepts, unified views on all questions related to its activities and tasks.... This unity should encompass and permeate all aspects and all manifestations of army life both in peacetime as well as wartime."[4] It "should establish a unity of thought and will in the army and turn it into a powerful, close-knit organization...."[5]

A great accomplishment of M. V. Frunze is primarily in the fact that he for the first time provided a scientific Marxist-Leninist definition of the Soviet state's military doctrine and disclosed its class content and socioeconomic causality. "...A unified military doctrine," wrote M. V. Frunze, "is the teaching adopted in the army of a given state and establishing the nature of the organizational development of the country's armed forces, the methods of troop combat training and their leadership on the basis of the views prevailing in the state on the nature of the military tasks confronting them and the methods of resolving them as derived from the class essence of the state and determined by the development level of the nation's productive forces."[6] This definition given more than 60 years ago, regardless of the enormous changes which have occurred in military affairs, has undergone virtually no changes.

In relying on Marxist-Leninist teachings, M. V. Frunze for the first time theoretically established the thesis of two closely interrelated and interdetermined aspects of military doctrine--the political and the military-technical. The political aspect of military doctrine, in his opinion, should encompass the questions concerning the political aims and the nature of war, their impact upon

the organizational development of the Armed Forces and on the nation's preparation for war. "Among the political is all," he wrote, "that stems from the relationship of the Red Army with the overall system of our state and our social way of life. This includes primarily a definition of the nature of the main military tasks confronting us, the establishing of the principles of military-organizational development, the inner life of the army, the nature of the relationship between its component elements and, finally, the political indoctrination of each soldier as a citizen of the Soviet Republic."[7]

M. V. Frunze put the questions of the direct implementation of military-organizational development, the technical equipping of the troops and the fleet, their training, as well as defining the forms and methods of carrying out military operations among the military-technical aspect of military doctrine. He wrote: "...By the purely military-technical aspect I understand all those questions which are related to the combat training of the troops, to the specific forms of the troop organization as well as the methods and procedures of leading them...."[8]

Of important methodological importance is the conclusion of M. V. Frunze on the relationship of military doctrine with the sociopolitical system of a state and the policy conducted by it. The nature of the military doctrine adopted in the army of the given state, in his opinion, would be determined by the nature of the overall political line of that social class which heads the state. The basic conditions for the viability of a military doctrine consist in its strict conformity to the overall goals of the state and to those material and spiritual resources which are available to it.

From what has been stated we can see the enormous theoretical and practical significance of the teaching of a unified military doctrine for resolving the questions of the Soviet state's military organizational development. Its importance was primarily that the tasks of armed defense which confronted the nation required a clear and precise answer to the question of what sort of war was to be prepared for: would it be of an offensive nature or conducted defensively. The choice of one or another type of strategic operations would predetermine the development trends of the means of armed combat, the preparation of the people and the nation's territory, the economy, science as well as training and indoctrination of the troops and military-political propaganda.

On the basis of an analysis of the military-political situation, the new era which commenced after the Great October Socialist Revolution and its basic contradictions, the balance of forces on the international scene and the state and prospects of development for military technology, M. V. Frunze drew profoundly sound conclusions on the nature of a future war. He considered that a modern war would have a class nature. "That war which we will wage," he wrote, "will not be a national war. It will be a revolutionary-class war. This means that our army will not fight for the interests of the nation...not in order to seize or encroach on any other people but rather to ensure the victories of our revolution from the encroachments of the proletariat's internal and external class enemies."[9]

A future war, M. V. Frunze emphasized, would be an all-encompassing war. This would be a war of two different sociopolitical and economc systems. In contrast

to the theories of a "lightning war," "air warfare" and "tank" warfare which arose and spread at that time abroad, M. V. Frunze convincingly showed that modern wars would be waged by armies of millions; in this regard military operations would encompass enormous territories and have a fierce nature. Entire peoples would become participants in the war. The wars themselves would draw into their vortex and decisively subordinate all aspects of social life and would involve all state and social interests without exception.

This provided M. V. Frunze with the grounds to conclude that modern wars will not be brief: "...if things reach the point of an armed clash, then clearly we will be confronted with a protracted and extended struggle and it is from such prospects that we must proceed when we raise the question of strengthening our military might and increasing the defense capability of the worker-peasant state."[10] From this stems the necessity of the prompt, all-round preparation of the nation and its armed forces for a stubborn struggle against a strong enemy.

One of the most characteristic traits of modern wars was seen by M. V. Frunze in the change in the relationship of the front and the rear. "The front," he wrote, "in the sense of an area directly engulfed in military operations has lost the nature of the previous living barrier which prevented the enemy to reach the rear. If not completely then, in any event, to a significant degree ...the rear now coincides with the front."[11]

In examining the distinguishing features of a future war, M. V. Frunze particularly pointed to its fluid nature: "...even disregarding the question of how effective is the maneuvering or fluid nature of operations from the purely military viewpoint, we must say that such a nature is inevitable for future operations, as this is determined by the basic, crucial factors lying outside our will and ourside our control."[12]

Considering the possibility of rapid scientific development as well as the noted trend of equipping the armies with new types of weapons and combat equipment, M. V. Frunze drew the exceptionally important conclusion that a future war to a significant degree, if not completely, would be a war of machines.

In coming out against the unjustified denying of the growing role of combat equipment in a war, M. V. Frunze convincingly showed that "we should have an army armed according to the last word of modern equipment, an army which in this regard will be on the same footing, if not higher, than the army of any bourgeois state."[13] He asserted that victory over the aggressor could be achieved due not only to one's enthusiasm, will for victory and hate for the existing world of the capitalist but also due to the necessary equipment without which this victory could not be achieved. For this reason the outfitting of the Red Army with all types of combat equipment was seen by M. V. Frunze as the most essential and fundamental task. He gave great importance to the development of aviation, artillery and the armored troops.

Here M. V. Frunze was far from absolutizing the role of technology. He decisively repudiated the views of bourgeois military theoreticians who asserted that technology and not people would be the determining, main factor in combat and rightly felt that technology in comparison with man is the accessory. Not

man complements the technology but rather technology complements man. Ultimately the decisive word remains with man.

The assertion of M. V. Frunze that a living person is always behind the technology and with this person the technology is dead has not lost its importance and freshness even now. "...A man with his professional, moral-psychological and physical qualities," pointed out MSU D. F. Ustinov, "holds the prime position in relation to technology at any stage of its development."[14]

The Great Patriotic War fully confirmed the vision of M. V. Frunze. Moreover, many characteristic traits which he wrote and spoke about 60 years ago are also inherent to modern wars. A future war, if the aggressive forces of imperialism succeed in unleashing it against the USSR and the other socialist commonwealth countries, will be the decisive armed clash between the opposing social systems of capitalism and socialism. On the part of the USSR and the fraternal socialist countries this will be a war in defense of the socialist fatherland, of the liberty and independence of their peoples and for this reason it will be profoundly just. On the part of the imperialist states it will have an unjust, aggressive nature.

M. V. Frunze made a truly outstanding contribution to elaborating the organizational principles for the development of the Red Army. In preparing for the 10th Party Congress (March 1921), Frunze together with S. I. Gusev drew up theses on the reorganization of the army. Their basic provisions were used in working out the congress decisions on military questions. The basic focus of all the activities of M. V. Frunze in resolving this most important question was the instructions of V. I. Lenin that "at whatever the cost we should keep our Red Army in full combat readiness and strengthen its combat capability."[15]

In discussing the possible ways of military-organizational development, opinions were voiced that it would be better to limit oneself to a small but well armed and trained professional army. But under the conditions of the limited financial capabilities of the Soviet state, this path was virtually impossible. M. V. Frunze was able not only to theoretically establish but also persuasively show in practice that at that time the only correct principle was the combining of a standing, professional army and territorial formations, since a small professional army with the enormous length of the state frontier could not handle the tasks of organizing a secure defense.

He set out his views on the organizational development of the Red Army in the work "Regulyarnaya armiya i militsiya" [The Regular Army and Militia], in a speech on 14 March 1921 at an all-Union conference on territorial formations as well as in a number of other works. In these he convincingly showed that a state's defensive system should be organized, in the first place, on a clear and accurate notion of the nature of future war; secondly, on a correct and precise consideration of those resources which our possible enemies might possess; thirdly, on the same consideration of our own resources. Under those specific conditions these demands were most met by a professional-territorial system. "The availability of territorial militia formations," wrote M. V. Frunze, "makes it possible for us to increase the number of men passing through the ranks of our army. In addition to this consideration, we have also considered that this system allows for military service without an extended separation from the

economy and this is a major gain for the population. Finally, this also properly meets the interests of training. For this reason on the question of the structure of our armed forces we are in favor of a standing army plus militia formations. For the given conditions and for the size of our peacetime personnel, there can be no other way out for us."[16]

The mixed manning system for the Red Army was legally established by the Decree of the TsIK [Central Executive Committee] and USSR SNK [Council of People's Commissars] of 8 August 1923. Here it was established that the professional-territorial system would be extended only to the rifle and cavalry formations while the technical and special troops as well as the Navy would have a professional personnel.

The shifting of the Red Army to a peacetime status and the formation of the USSR opened up favorable opportunities to establish nationality-based formations. These were organized in many Union and autonomous republics. In summing up the work done in this area, M. V. Frunze pointed out: "The experience which we have shows that the path outlined by us is completely correct and it should help to eradicate nationality contradictions and hostility and at the same time does not arouse concern about the internal integrity and might of the Red Army."[17]

The theoretical works and speeches of M. V. Frunze are permeated by the Leninist thesis that the fundamental principle in Soviet military organizational development is leadership by the Communist Party. "No one and nothing," he said, "can establish and carry out their policy both in the nation and in the army outside of the party and without it."[18] M. V. Frunze called the Communist Party the leader of the Red Army which "has known and knows only this leader."

In theoretically establishing the importance of the constant observance of the principle of party leadership over the Armed Forces, M. V. Frunze particularly emphasized that the dedication of all the personnel to the Communist Party is an indispensable condition for the strength of the Army and Navy and their combat capability. In one of his orders he wrote that a deep and unwavering dedication to the party, the following of its ideals, its discipline and steadfastness serve as an indispensable condition for the strength of the Army and Navy and their combat capability.

In his military-theoretical works, M. V. Frunze devoted great importance to party political work and to strengthening the party-political apparatus in the Army and Navy. He constantly emphasized that the main task of the army political bodies was to ensure the leading role in the Red Army to the working class in the form of its vanguard, the Communist Party. M. V. Frunze saw in party political work the main means for the communist indoctrination of the Soviet Armed Forces personnel. For this reason he felt that each commander was obliged to conduct political work among his subordinates.

The Leninist principle of the leading role of the CPSU has been confirmed by the entire course of the history of establishing and developing the Soviet Armed Forces. Here under present-day conditions the party's leading role in military-organizational development has been continuously growing.

M. V. Frunze made a significant contribution to elaborating the questions of military instruction and indoctrination.* In his works written on the basis of the guiding instructions of the Communist Party many questions concerning the training of Army and Navy personnel have been posed as well as profoundly and completely worked out. In solving these questions, he has proceeded completely from the fact that the Soviet Army must conduct combat operations against a strong enemy. For this reason he demanded that all attention be focused on the all-round training of the troops. With particular force M. V. Frunze defended the need to achieve a unity of political and military indoctrination, seeing in this the guarantee for developing in all the personnel high moral-combat qualities essential for achieving victory. He gave great importance to the international indoctrination of the men, in repeatedly pointing out that the Red Army, indoctrinated in a spirit of the fraternity of peoples, in future military clashes will be the best friend and defender of all suppressed nationalities.

M. V. Frunze placed particularly high demands upon the training of command personnel. He constantly and strongly fostered the idea of the need for each commander to master extensive knowledge: purely military, economic and political, and he recommended that they thoroughly study the military-theoretical heritage of the founders of Marxism-Leninism. Here M. V. Frunze warned that military theory cannot provide the commander with any ready-made pat decision but can only serve as a guiding principle. The Soviet commander should fully master the dialectical method which would make it possible for him in each specific instance to select the most suitable out of the multiplicity of diverse forms, methods and means.

M. V. Frunze felt that the command personnel of the Red Army should be marked by the ability to quickly assess the developing situation, to draw correct conclusions from it, to take the corresponding decision and firmly carry it out. "Since we," he said, "are preparing the army for a decisive struggle against strong and serious enemies, we should have at the head of our units men who possess sufficient independence, firmness, initiative and responsibility."[19] These demands sound particularly pertinent in terms of modern wars, when the dynamically developing combat operations demand the manifestation of initiative, firmness and decisiveness on the part of all levels of commanders.

M. V. Frunze played a major role in working out the regulatory documents which control the life of their troops and their training for combat operations. The question of the need to introduce new guidance documents was raised by M. V. Frunze immediately after the war. "In line with the military-technical development which was the result of the imperialist war, an urgent task of today is...to revise all our regulations, programs and manuals on the basis of the systematized collective experience of the Red Army and the appearance on the scene of new means of combat."[20] As an initiative the staff of the Ukrainian and Crimean troops, with the active participation of the commander, worked out draft cavalry and infantry manuals as well as a draft regulation for air chiefs.

At the end of 1924, under the chairmanship of M. V. Frunze, a session was held of the Main Editorial Commission and subsequent to this the Red Army received cavalry, artillery and armored field manuals and a number of other manuals was published. They were all permeated with the idea of winning victory by bold,

decisive actions, by the coordinated efforts of all the types of weapons and branches of troops as well as by the demands of organizing close and unbroken cooperation between them.

All those ideas which M. V. Frunze voiced on the questions of strengthening military discipline have maintained their pertinence at present. He proceeded from the view that the strength of an army lies in discipline, in the determination to precisely and unswervingly carry out the orders of the appropriate command levels. For this reason the maintaining of discipline in its ranks was seen by him as an obligatory and essential condition.

M. V. Frunze repeatedly pointed to the enormous difference between the modern understanding of discipline and what had existed in the old Russian Army. He emphasized that discipline in the Red Army should be based not upon the fear of punishment and naked coercion but rather on each serviceman's voluntary and conscious performing of service duty. In this context on the matter of strengthening military discipline he demanded that methods of persuasion, of a political, moral and cultural effect be applied primarily and foremost but without stopping short of the use of the methods of coercion if the interests of the matter demanded this.

The question of one-man command in the Army and Navy holds an important place in the theoretical heritage of M. V. Frunze. In principle the advisability of converting to one-man command on all the organizational levels of the Red Army and Navy has always been recognized. But due to a number of objective factors, primarily the filling of command positions by generals and officers of the former Russian Army who often were hostile to Soviet power and because of this required strict party supervision, in the course of the Civil War the institution of military commissars was established. However, as the dictatorship of the proletariat grew stronger, as the role of the Communist Party increased, as the worker-peasant group in the command personnel increased and as its military and political training further grew, the necessary conditions arose for converting to one-man command. And this transition was carried out under the initiative of M. V. Frunze. And this was carried out consistently considering the branch of troops, the nature of the troop formations or institutions, the inner state of the units and ensuring the correct employment of the political personnel who had been released.

At that time, one-man command was carried out in two forms. One type of solely-responsible commander was the party member commanders. They combined not only the drill and administrative-housekeeping functions but also the party and political-indoctrinational ones. The second form of one-man command was employed in those instances when the commander was a non-party person and could not direct the party organization. For this reason he was not responsible for the cultural and educational indoctrination of the Red Armymen and was entrusted solely with drill, administrative and housekeeping functions.

The switch to one-man command caused a great rise in the initiative of the command personnel, it strengthened the feeling of responsibility, it further reinforced the unity of all the personnel and marked the beginning to the further growth of the combat might and amelioration of the internal life of the Red Army.

A great deal was done by M. V. Frunze in the area of elaborating the questions of military art. With his active involvement the bases were set down for operational art. He approved the manual "Vyssheye komandovaniye" [The Higher Command] containing the main provisions on the conduct of army and front operations. This contributed greatly to establishing a precise division of Soviet military art into strategy, operational art and tactics.

On the basis of an analysis of the experience of the Civil War and anticipating the nature of a future war, M. V. Frunze outlined the tasks and most important particular features of Soviet military strategy. He proceeded from the fact that inherent to it would be a revolutionary activeness, decisiveness and a desire to completely defeat the enemy. However, M. V. Frunze was categorically against a one-sided approach to choosing the forms of conducting strategic actions. He rightly felt that "the main, predominant nature of our future operations will be maneuvering or fluid. But at the same time, this very maneuverability requires a broad and complete familiarity with the positional forms of waging war."[21] In his opinion, the only correct conclusion would be that the positional forms of warfare with their characteristic protracted state of immobility and permanence of the front lines, can in no instance be the main, predominant forms of our next clashes.

Along with the conduct of defensive actions, M. V. Frunze did not exclude the possibility of a troop retreat. "A situation can always arise whereby a retreat is inevitable and even necessary and useful. For this reason our Red commanders should instill in themselves and in the men subordinate to them that they view a retreat as one of the factors in the general course of offensive operations. A retreat can be necessary to create a better situation for preparing a new and decisive offensive.... It is essential to consider the basic aim of the operation."[22]

In line with the possibility of employing different forms for conducting combat, M. V. Frunze drew the following conclusion: "As we are unable politically to remain in a situation of just defense, our Red Army should be both technically and psychologically prepared for carrying out any sort of missions."[23] But here he pointed out that in peacetime the troops should be prepared primarily for carrying out the missions of conducting an active offensive, as this was the most crucial, important and psychologically most difficult task.

In his works and speeches, M. V. Frunze set forward a number of fundamentally new provisions on the unity of the front and rear. "...The link of the successful conduct of military operations with the economic condition of a country and, primarily, with the condition of its industry," he wrote, "is obvious for all of us. The economic situation of a nation, in particular the situation of its industry, determines those basic aspects which will play the crucial role in one or another outcome of the operations."[24] For this reason the mobilizational readiness, the combat capability and the viability of modern armies to an enormous degree depend upon the state of the rear.

Considering that the outcome of the conflict will be determined by the involvement of the nation's entire population in it and requires a straining of certainly all the productive forces, M. V. Frunze concluded that it was essential to ready the state's economy and the rear services of the armed forces ahead of

time for war. "As the immediate burden of waging the war falls on all the people and on the entire nation and as the rear assumes such importance in the general course of military operations, naturally the task of the complete and planned preparation of the rear even in peacetime comes to the forefront."[25] This preparation, in his mind, should be aimed, in the first place, at ensuring continuous supply of the front with everything needed to conduct combat operations; secondly, providing the rear itself with everything needed for maintaining its operation and stability on the proper level.

M. V. Frunze considered it essential to so organize the nation's economy and give such a focus to the economy both in the industrial area as well as in the agricultural area so that even in peacetime defense needs would be taken into account. "With each new initiative," he pointed out, "economic, cultural and otherwise, it is always essential to ask the question: how will the results of this initiative conform to the question of ensuring national defense? Is it not possible, without harming the peacetime needs, to see to it that the achieving of certain military tasks is ensured here?"[26]

Of exceptionally great methodological significance is the conclusion of M. V. Frunze that a nation's defense capability depends upon the development of all spheres of society's life and the degree of involvement of all the people in the strengthening of defense might. In this context he pointed out that not only in the course of a war but also before a war all the state bodies and all the people should be involved in the cause of preparing the nation for defense.

Extremely pertinent at present is the advice of M. V. Frunze on the necessity of establishing the closest link with scientific centers and scientists as this, in his opinion, would be a fruitful force during the period of peacetime activities and would make it possible to fully utilize all the practical conclusions in the course of the war in the interests of increasing the combat might of the armed forces.

The questions of organizing leadership in a war hold a significant place in the theoretical works and speeches of M. V. Frunze. "The first major war which our Soviet Union will have to endure," he said, "will demand from us the straining of all the might and all the means at our disposal. It...will turn the Union into an armed camp.... Hence the conclusion that the preparation of defense matters should be carried out not only by the military department...but also by the civilian apparatus, that is, the soviet, trade union and party."[27]

In line with this M. V. Frunze raised the question of the need to establish a superior state body capable in the course of a war of guiding the activities of all the state departments and institutions and uniting their efforts in the aims of the greatest possible employment of the nation's material, spiritual and military capabilities for achieving victory over the enemy. "The experience of the Civil War shows that if we did not have in the Labor and Defense Council a body which encompassed all aspects of our Soviet life, we would scarcely have emerged the victors from that clash.... Hence, in preparing for a future war, we should consider this experience...."[28] Here M. V. Frunze stubbornly emphasized the idea of the closest link of the military apparatus with the civilian in all areas of work. In organizing the military apparatus he endeavored to ensure a maximum flexibility which would make it possible to achieve the most

effective employment of all the available resources and effective forms and methods of armed combat. In the system of the leadership of a war M. V. Frunze at that time gave an important place to the Red Army Staff which, in his opinion, should not only be the brains of the Red Army but also the military center of the entire state.

M. V. Frunze not only drew profound theoretical conclusions on the fundamental questions of military-organizational development. He played a major role in carrying out the measures outlined by the Party to reorganize the Red Army and Navy known as the Military Reform of 1924-1925. Under his leadership there was a decisive switch to a mixed system of troop manning, the central bodies of military administration were reorganized, the work of the rear services was improved, nationality-based formations were established, a planned system of military training was introduced, a precise organizational structure was worked out, a transition to one-man command was implemented and effective measures were taken in the area of the ideological and political indoctrination of the personnel. A great deal was done to eliminate the army's lag in the area of technical equipping. The carrying out of these measures played an enormous role in the strengthening of the Red Army and improving national defense.

In his speech "The Next Task of the Political Workers," M. V. Frunze, in summing up the results of the work done, pointed out with great satisfaction: "We have moved ahead significantly not only in the area of the cultural and political rise of the Red Army and in the area of strengthening its internal order... but also in all other areas of its life.... I feel that with such a material base which is being provided to us by the development of our economy, we will gain a complete opportunity to prepare, train and indoctrinate an army to which no other nation in the world will be the equal in terms of power."[29] This prediction of M. V. Frunze has been fully confirmed by the entire history of the existence of the Soviet Armed Forces.

The value of the theoretical heritage of M. V. Frunze consists in its close tie with life, with the practice of the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces and with the strengthening of national defense.

The fundamental theoretical concepts which were worked out by M. V. Frunze on many questions of military affairs completely withstood the testing during the years of the Great Patriotic War having provided a further on-going development of Soviet military science and military art as well as the improving of the organizational structure of the troops. They have also kept their importance under present-day conditions. This shows how far ahead he was able to see and how skillfully he employed the Marxist dialectical method in investigating the fundamental problems of Soviet military science.

FOOTNOTES

[1] V. I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 44, p 296.

[2] M. V. Frunze, "Izbrannyye proizvedeniya" [Selected Works], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1984, pp 59-60.

[3] Ibid., p 473.

[4] Ibid., p 53.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., pp 34-35.

[7] Ibid., p 53.

[8] Ibid., pp 53-54.

[9] Ibid., p 456.

[10] Ibid., p 363.

[11] Ibid., p 184.

[12] Ibid., p 64.

[13] M. V. Frunze, "Sobr. soch." [Collected Works], Moscow, Gosizdat, Vol III, 1927, pp 91-92.

[14] D. F. Ustinov, "Sluzhim Rodine, delu kommunizmu" [We Serve the Motherland and the Cause of Communism], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1982, p 89.

[15] V. I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 42, p 130.

[16] M. V. Frunze, "Izbrannyye proizvedeniya," p 412.

[17] Ibid., p 421.

[18] Ibid., p 237.

* The questions of military instruction and indoctrination in the works of M. V. Frunze have been described in greater detail in: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, Nos 11, 12, 1984.

[19] M. V. Frunze, Izbrannyye proizvedeniya," p 497.

[20] Ibid., p 82.

[21] Ibid., p 66.

[22] Ibid., p 69.

[23] Ibid., p 59.

[24] Ibid., p 246.

[25] Ibid., p 184.

[26] Ibid., p 190.

[27] Ibid., pp 393-394.

[28] Ibid., p 213.

[29] Ibid., pp 511-512.

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EDITOR OUTLINES CONTENT OF COMMANDER TRAINING

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 1, Jan 85 (signed to press 24 Dec 84) pp 90-92

[Editorial reply to reader request]

[Excerpt] [Reader request] Please tell us about commander training in the USSR Armed Forces. What does it consist of? What categories of servicemen are admitted to the exercises? How is it organized? asks A. N. Stetsenko from Gomel.

[Editor reply] Commander training is a system of training measures carried out in the aim of improving the knowledge and skills of officers, warrant officers [praporshchik, michman] and sergeants (petty officers) of the Armed Forces. It is a component part of combat and operational training.

In the USSR and the armies of the other socialist states, commander training is comprised of political training based on a study of Marxist-Leninist theory, operational-tactical and special training, as well as military-technical, gunnery, reconnaissance, physical and educational methods training.

A larger portion of the training time, as a rule, is assigned to the operational-tactical and special training the exercises of which are ordinarily held in the field (in the air, at sea). The organizational procedure and the tasks of commander training in the USSR Armed Forces are determined by orders of the minister of defense, by directives of the General Staff, by the instructions of the commanders-in-chief of the Armed Services, the commanders of military districts, troop groups, fleets and field forces as well as by the commanders of the formations and units.

Training groups of officer personnel (the group of the commander, chief of staff, chief of the branches of troops, special troops, services and so forth) are organized in the formations, units and staffs.

Warrant officers, sergeants and petty officers are brought together into groups according to specialty. The commander training programs provide instruction at commander exercises, assemblies and specialty drills, procedural, demonstration and instructor-procedural exercises as well as by independent work.

Exercises in the commander training system are conducted during the entire training year while the assemblies are held once or twice during the winter training period and once or twice in the summer period with several days assigned to each. The commanders of the formations (units, ships) determine the number of drills for the various serviceman categories, their duration and the procedure for holding them. Here they consider the specialties of the trainees, the level of their training, the state of the training facilities, disposition and so forth.

Procedural and instructor-procedural exercises are conducted with the group leaders prior to each new subject in the leading areas. Definite days and hours during service time are assigned for independent work. The subjects relating to operational and tactical training, as a rule, are worked out by conducting group exercises and during quizzes; for gunnery, military-technical and special training this is done at group (practical) exercises or specialty drills.

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